



ARINC vMUSE™ Enterprise

*Rockwell Collins helps cut costs and IT resource demand
at George Best Belfast City Airport*

For a regional airport like George Best Belfast City Airport, providing first-class passenger and airline support services is highly demanding in terms of resources and time. But with ARINC vMUSE™ Enterprise from Rockwell Collins, the airport has been able to roll out a single, cloud-based IT infrastructure that supports multiple airline check-in applications. It reduces costs and demand on IT resources for the airport and airlines, and improves the customer experience.

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Rockwell Collins helps Northern Ireland regional airport cut the cost and demand on IT resources of deploying enterprise-class services

George Best Belfast City Airport (GBBCA) in Northern Ireland is a regional airport serving a range of destinations, mainly in Great Britain and Ireland. Over 2.5 million passengers pass through the airport every year, representing approximately 40 percent of the scheduled domestic air traffic to and from Northern Ireland.

“For George Best Belfast City Airport, ARINC vMUSE Enterprise is a mission-critical system that underpins the passenger journey from the point of check-in to aircraft boarding. It’s a reliable system that handling agents and airlines have confidence in, and it ensures that check-in times and associated queues are [reduced to a minimum] and aircraft can be despatched quickly and efficiently.”

*Raymond Hooke, Airside Operations Manager
George Best Belfast City Airport*

Challenges

- Compact terminal and small IT team
- Investment needed to develop and support new service innovation
- Increase operational efficiency while also reducing costs

Solution

- ARINC vMUSE™ Enterprise
- Rockwell Collins implementation and support services

Benefits

- Redirects capital and operational investment towards emerging service technologies
- Allows IT resources and expertise to be focused on customer service innovation
- Reduces costs for airlines setting up and operating at George Best Belfast City Airport
- Helps make check-in processes faster and more efficient for passengers and staff
- Delivers an enterprise-class IT check-in infrastructure for lower, up-front investment

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Challenges

GBBCA operates within a compact terminal building and needs to ensure that its operations and services are run efficiently and cost effectively. One key operation which impacts the airport, the airlines using the airport, and, in particular, passengers, is the check-in and boarding operation. The airport needed to replace its check-in and boarding system because of aging hardware whilst retaining a competitive cost base for the airlines. Previously, each airline had to order and maintain its own separate circuit from its host system to the airport. This was both costly and the associated gateways consumed space in the data rooms. Now, with the ARINC airports solution, those same airlines only need to have one circuit to the new data centre from where the host system can be distributed to each airport where it operates on the ARINC vMUSE enterprise network. Instead of a dedicated circuit and gateway for each airline, all that is required at the airport is a single router for multiple airline host connections.

GBBCA needed a supplier prepared to offer a tailored solution. Raymond Hooke, Airside Operations Manager at George Best Belfast City Airport, says, “Choosing Rockwell Collins was very straightforward. As an organisation, Rockwell Collins is agile and fast in its decision making and was quick to understand our business needs and culture. At the end of the first meeting we had largely specified the finer details and agreed on the deliverables. And the proposal that they delivered in response demonstrated that they had understood exactly what we needed, rather than trying to impose something on us.”



Solution

GBBCA has deployed the ARINC vMUSE Enterprise solution from Rockwell Collins. ARINC vMUSE Enterprise eliminates the need for an airport to invest in and deploy servers, core computing space and costly technical manpower. It allows airports of any size to launch a check-in service in minutes – in the airport or at off-site locations – using only a PC, laptop, or thin-client device; an existing printer; and a standard internet connection. The solution at GBBCA has been deployed by Rockwell Collins and is hosted, managed and supported by ARINC airports on a daily basis.

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Hooke says, “Rockwell Collins is one of the three big suppliers in airport technology so its competence is not in doubt. While the software itself is essentially a commodity, it’s other elements of the complete solution that set [Rockwell Collins] apart – the company’s innovation, experience and flexibility. When we deployed ARINC vMUSE Enterprise a few years ago, it was the only cloud-based solution in market and it is that kind of technological lead that gives Rockwell Collins a different dimension that its competitors don’t seem to have.”

ARINC vMUSE Enterprise supports 65 PC units, 20 check-in desks and 11 boarding gates. The platform is used by a variety of charter operators and airlines, such as flybe, Aer Lingus and British Airways who between them operate around 40,000 flights and carry 2.5 million passengers annually to and from GBBCA.

As well as the airlines’ own systems, the handling agents at GBBCA use a local departure control system which also sits on the ARINC vMUSE Enterprise infrastructure. This is used for one-off and ad-hoc charter flights.



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Benefits

Hooke says, “If we didn’t have this system we would need every airline that operates here to have its own hardware and connectivity and that would mean multiple PCs at every check-in and boarding point and a hugely complex and space-hungry communications infrastructure. But with ARINC vMUSE Enterprise, check-in desks and boarding points are clean and uncluttered, since they only have one small thin client PC from which any airline can access their dedicated applications.”

However, the cloud-based ARINC vMUSE Enterprise solution brings additional benefits for the airport - specifically lower costs and reduced IT and systems management and maintenance. ARINC vMUSE Enterprise is particularly suited to smaller airports like GBBCA because it is quick to set up and requires few on-site IT resources.

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Hooke says, “ARINC vMUSE Enterprise gives us all the benefits of an enterprise system – but without a large, upfront investment. We are always on the lookout for ways to increase efficiency. The ARINC airports cloud solution uses less space in the comms room and all the administration for the system that would have been time consuming for the airport is now moved out to Rockwell Collins’ data centre. All that support, maintenance and configuration is handled by Rockwell Collins as part of the support arrangements.”

One of the benefits for the airport is that it frees up resources to work on other projects. Hooke says, “Five years ago a significant element of the airport’s IT resources went towards check-in/boarding systems. Now it’s less so, with things like online check-in reducing demand. But now, the

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airports need to facilitate new systems and services, such as scanning boarding passes and mobile check-in. So a solution like ARINC vMUSE Enterprise enables us to focus on and invest in those newer, more demanding services, while helping to reduce costs in conventional check-in systems. So the savings we’ve realised with ARINC vMUSE Enterprise can be re-directed to where they are needed most.”

ARINC vMUSE Enterprise also benefits airlines because they no longer need to pay for and provide a dedicated circuit and associated infrastructure costs at the airport. Hooke says, “ARINC vMUSE Enterprise means that not only can an airline operate at GBBCA at a lower cost, that airline can set up at the airport at quite short notice and any subsequent moves and changes are also quicker and easier. Otherwise the airline would have to set up a manual check-in service, which is slower for the passenger and a lot more work for airline staff.”

Another important benefit of ARINC vMUSE Enterprise is the way it complements the airport’s environmental policies. Because ARINC vMUSE Enterprise needs less on-site hardware, such as thin client PCs, this consumes much less energy than traditional full-power PCs used to support a conventional check-in desk. The equipment is also less complex so it has a longer shelf life and is less likely to fail, further reducing time, money and energy needed to support the hardware.



Hooke says, "For George Best Belfast City Airport, ARINC vMUSE Enterprise is a mission-critical system that underpins the passenger journey from the point of check-in to aircraft boarding. It's a reliable system that handling agents and airlines have confidence in, and it ensures that check-in times and associated queues are kept down and aircraft can be despatched quickly and efficiently."

Hooke adds, "The ARINC vMUSE Enterprise concept brings to the table a number of key advantages including a much smaller capital investment, lower energy consumption, less space requirements and a significantly reduced roll out time. Additionally, because the system monitoring and administration is accomplished in real time at the Rockwell Collins data center, there is no need for an IT administrator exclusively focused on the passenger check-in system. From our first encounter with ARINC airports, it was clear they were a highly efficient and agile organisation who could listen to, as well as understand, client requirements and were prepared to customise their solution accordingly."

About Rockwell Collins

Rockwell Collins is a pioneer in the development and deployment of innovative communication and aviation electronic solutions for commercial and government applications. Our ARINC information management services offer seamless, secure and reliable solutions to customers in the aviation & airport, rail and critical infrastructure sectors and enable mission-critical data and voice communications and management throughout the world.

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