

Asky now offers web-based booking

Asky, the West and Central African airline, has partnered PayGate and booking engine SITA to offer web-based booking to its customers for the first time.



"Online commerce is not yet common in West Africa - people are not used to it - but the demand is growing," said Asky's Distribution System and Help Desk Supervisor, Lionel Sonny. "Expanding our distribution channels to include the Web enables us to reach more people, more easily and at a lower cost than through traditional travel agencies."

Sonny said that Asky, which is a joint venture between several West African governments and is based in Togo, chose PayGate to handle its online payments because it's an African company that has proven ability to manage the technical challenges of e-commerce and has existing relationships with other African airlines, as well as Asky's reservation system provider, SITA.

Unlike any other business

"Airlines are unlike any other business when it comes to e-commerce, because of that essential relationship with a third-party booking engine," said PayGate's head of business development, Brendon Williamson. "It's because of reservation systems like SITA, Galileo and Amadeus that airline customers can make bookings around the world and plan a single trip using multiple airlines. Managing payments also means managing security, cancellations and refunds. It's a complex business that can become very technically challenging."

"Fortunately," said Williamson, "PayGate has a good working relationship with SITA, established when we first began working with Air Namibia. At that stage we did some special development work so that our systems could integrate with SITA's - and so the process of taking Asky's bookings online was relatively uncomplicated. The difficult technical work had already been done."

PayGate has since enabled online bookings and payments for several other airlines including Air Namibia, TAAG, Air Madagascar, Iberia and Mozambique's LAM.

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