

United Airlines to retrofit seatback entertainment screens to aircraft

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Dhaka: United Airlines is taking a huge step with its in-flight entertainment as part of a major post-pandemic plan announced in late June. The Chicago-based airline is buying nearly 300 new planes and said each of them will be outfitted with seatback entertainment screens as they arrive in the next five years.

However, passengers will not have to be on a new plane to watch the free lineup of movies, TV shows, games, and other entertainment.

United said it plans to add seatback screens to existing narrow-body planes without screens (except for regional aircraft). The retrofitting project, which will also include other features including larger overhead bins, will begin next year, and two out of three planes will be done by 2023, the airline said.

Currently, about a third of United's 580 narrow-bodies have seatback screens. Passengers on other flights can stream a library of free entertainment to their smartphones, tablets, and other electronic devices.

"We here at United do not think streaming on your own device is good enough," Toby Enqvist, United's Chief Customer Officer, said in a statement. "The airline is going to have seatback entertainment at "each and every seat," he added.

[United CEO Scott Kirby](#), a former American executive, said he has long been a "big fan" of seatback screens and said he counted more than 60 percent of passengers on a flight last month using them.

United says its research shows improved inflight entertainment will give the airline an edge over rivals without it.

"There's no doubt in my mind that this is something our customer's value," claimed Andrew Nocella, Chief Commercial Officer, United.

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