

Inflight WiFi provider Gogo is building a 5G network

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In-flight WiFi provider Gogo said it will launch a 5G network for business and commercial aviation in 2021. The air-to-ground network will be built on Gogo's existing tower infrastructure of more than 250 towers using unlicensed spectrum in the 2.4GHz range. The network will also rely on Gogo's proprietary modem and beamforming technology and support all spectrum types and bands.

"We expect to launch Gogo 5G at the same time as the terrestrial telecommunications companies are deploying the same generation of technology on the ground — a first in the inflight connectivity industry," said Gogo CEO Oakleigh Thorne. "Gogo 5G is the next step in our technology evolution and is expected to deliver an unparalleled user experience, pairing high performance with low latency and network-wide redundancy."

The company's 5G announcement lines up with its recent AWS infrastructure move. Earlier this year Gogo announced that it was migrating its infrastructure to Amazon Web Services as it works to scale key aspects of its business, such as the number of airlines it can support and how fast it can process stream data for airlines.

In addition to providing in-flight entertainment and WiFi service to passengers, Gogo also gathers information about passengers using its services, applies analytics to the data, and churns out insights that help airlines improve experiences. But as in-flight connectivity improves — largely through Gogo's 2Ku technology, which hit peak antenna speeds of 70 Mbps — Gogo said airlines are increasingly eager to leverage that connectivity to manage ancillary systems on planes and bolster safety and maintenance operations.

Looking ahead, Gogo is hoping to leverage the AWS migration to process data streams in near real time — a feat the company expects will open new business and growth opportunities as connectivity continues to improve. www.zdnet.com

