BRITISH AIRWAYS CELEBRATES BA.COM CHRISTMAS BIRTHDAY

News / Airlines

Michael Jackson's Earth Song was the festive number one, kids were going crazy to have the must-have 'Pogs' as presents, there was a run on Cranberries thanks to Delia Smith's latest Christmas recipes – and ba.com was about to make its debut on the internet.

The worldwide web was still finding its feet and few people really understood how big a difference the internet was going to make to their everyday lives.

But British Airways had embraced the new technology and launched ba.com just a few minutes before midnight on Christmas Eve, 1995.

Twenty years - and millions of customers - later, ba.com is one of the most successful and visited travel sites in the UK with more than 18 million visits globally each month and ranks among the top ten online retailers by revenue in the country.

Sara Dunham, British Airways' head of marketing retail and direct channels, said: "From humble beginnings to a website with global reach, ba.com has become a real powerhouse, with nearly 60 per cent of our customers now checking-in on desktop and on mobile – up from 20 per cent in 2006.

"The number of flights bought on ba.com has soared over the years, by 300 per cent over the last decade and continues to rise.

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“The last twenty years has seen constant innovation, allowing us to develop and grow ba.com, enabling customers to manage their whole travelling experience online, whether on PCs, laptops, phones, tablets, or now, the Apple watch.

“We’ll see increasing personalisation on digital platforms to make ba.com our customer’s personal travel concierge. And we look forward to the next twenty years and all the exciting changes in store as we celebrate this Christmas with ba.com’s coming of age.”

When launched, ba.com had little more than a handful of pages, showing basic timetable, product and contact information.

But as interest in the internet exploded, people across the airline saw the opportunities that the website and the new technology could offer.

Nick Gassman, British Airways’ user experience and design manager, who led the original ba.com launch team, said: “While knowledge of the internet was limited at the time the idea of a worldwide computer network seemed well suited to our worldwide business ambitions.

“It’s easy now to take the internet for granted, but it shouldn’t be forgotten how far we’ve come and how vital it, and ba.com, are to putting the customer in
control and making their whole travelling experience much easier.”

Over the last 20 years British Airways’ IT and commercial experts have constantly refined the site to make it ever more intuitive and put the customer at the heart of the experience.

Now ba.com has become an indispensable virtual travel companion with several thousand pages of information.

Available in multiple languages with specially tailored content for customers in different countries, it can be viewed on PCs, laptops, tablets and phones, with integrated information also available on the Apple watch, through the airline’s newly enhanced app.

It offers a world of flights, hotels, holiday packages, rental cars and special offers to nearly 200 destinations around the globe served by British Airways – and beyond – thanks to its partner airlines.

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