

TRAVEL AND HOSPITALITY

Stratajet uses technology to cut customer costs, but keeps exclusivity

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Stratajet mobile application for iOS

By BRIELLE JAEKEL

A new private jet-booking platform is emerging on the scene, valuing technology to help combat waste within the industry, but hoping not to sacrifice luxury.

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While bookings within the private jet sector have slightly spiked within the last year, the sector is still highly inefficient and segmented. New platform and mobile application Stratajet has launched for users to book flights with accurate, real-time costs instead of just ballpark quotes and cutting costs to appeal to the average consumer, but it will be its performance and capability that will really show if these are just marketing claims or not.

"From the surface, it seems similar to other apps that claim 'real time' price quotes," said Doug Gollan, founder and editor-in-Chief of [DG Amazing Experiences](#), a weekly travel-focused e-newsletter for private jet owners. "The challenge is there are several layers in terms of chartering a private jet.

"You have a broker, such as JetSmarter, Stratajet and hundreds of others," he said. "Stratajet and JetSmarter don't operate or own the planes they charter.

"Then you have the operator, sometimes called a management company. Out of the over 7,000 private jets that can be chartered in the U.S. (Part 135), only a couple hundred are actually owned by the operator (XOJET, TMC, WheelsUp, VistaJet, JetSuite). The rest are managed by the operator on behalf of the actual jet owner. In many, many cases the operator, with the exception of the ones I mentioned that own their jets, operators have to get owner approval to charter the jet, so there is a manual process of contacting the owner."

Mr. Gollan is not associated with Stratajet but agreed to comment as an industry expert.

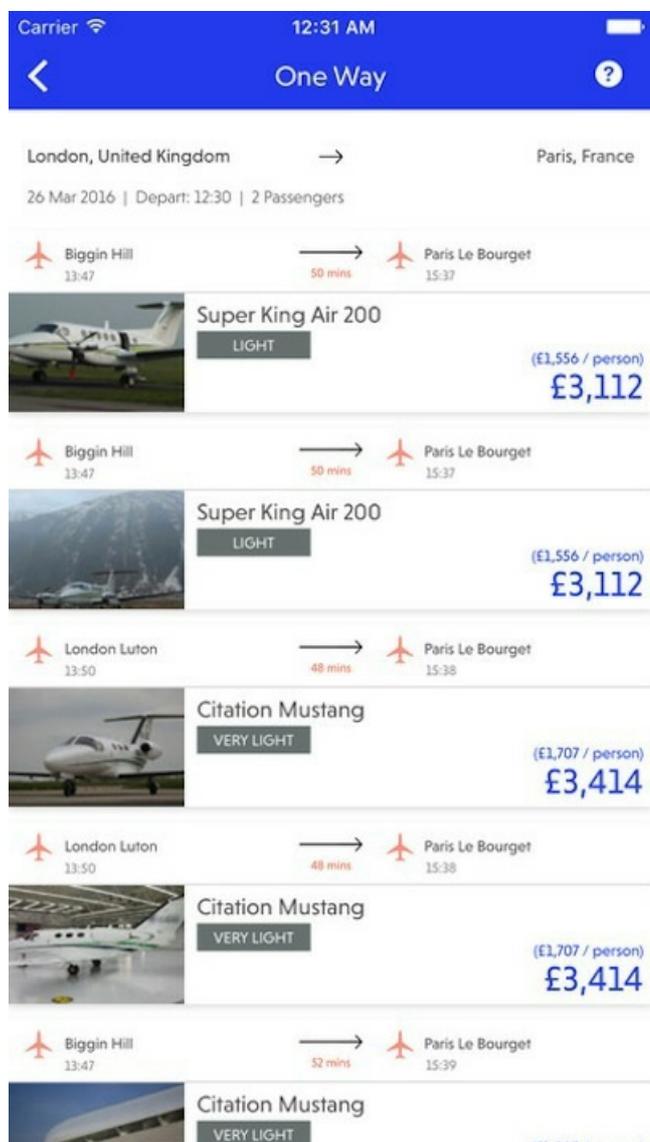
Stratajet could not comment by press deadline.

Private jet disruption

Mobile and desktop users can now immediately book flights via the Stratajet platform with real pricing, instead of quotes that are not always accurate. The new platform is focusing on capabilities such as its real-time pricing to appeal to affluent and average consumers to circumvent inefficiencies within the industry.

Stratajet will have to compete with other platforms such as JetSmarter, which also offers competitive pricing. However, the former is hoping that its strategy to preserve the exclusivity of private flying will allow it to become a leader in booking and disrupt the industry.

The booking platform is a computer software program that leverages automation for users to find empty flights that can be booked immediately, as well as allow them to view accurate prices. Stratajet is able to serve consumers prices of up to 75 percent off by tapping into the substantial number of private jet flights that take off without any passengers.



Stratajet's mobile app list of available flights

Empty leg flights are when planes take off without any guests on board to fly back to their home base or to their next destination. Stratajet's automated system allows it to track flights that will be flying without passengers and then list the flights on its platform.

Customers will be able to browse flights going to their desired destination that are nearby and can book them for a discounted price. Stratajet will reroute the flights after booking to depart at a location close to the customer.

Private jet competition

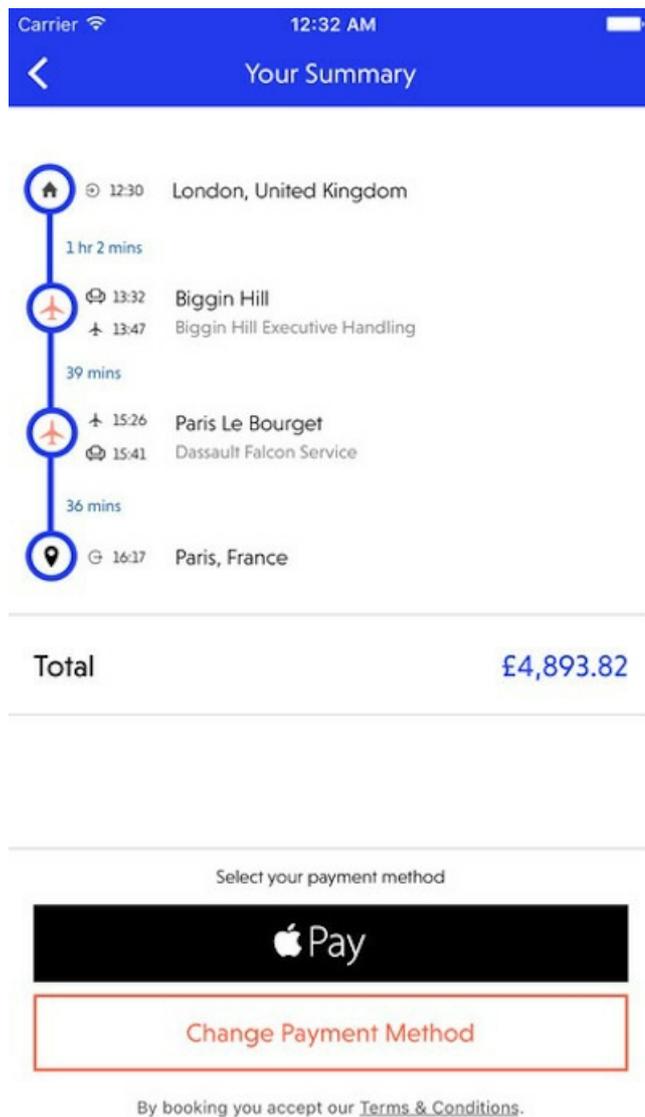
JetSmarter is a similar private jet-booking platform that focuses on cutting costs.

Recently, private aviation company XOJet partnered with the app to allow customers to book on the platform to fly its charters, making JetSmarter a significant competitor.

XOJet is now lending its fleet exclusively to JetSmarter, ahead of the digital aviation marketplace's new app. The partnership means faster booking and cheaper flights for members, who can now quickly grab a ride through the app ([see more](#)).

While the mobile app is reflective of modern consumer behavior, Sratajet is hoping to compete by keeping exclusivity with private jet flying. JetSmarter cuts costs by having customers book flights that have empty seats, but still have other passengers.

Sratajet only books passenger-less flights, meaning customers will not have to fly with strangers. Users can book directly within the mobile app and desktop Web site, as well as pay.



Sratajet screen shot of payment screen

Users will be able to contact an account manager at all times through the platform in an effort to stay on top of customer service. Fliers type in their departing and arriving address, city or nearby landmark, as well as the number of passengers, date and time to search available flights.

The app or Web site then provides a list of flights that fit the user's search criteria. Users click on flights of interest to read leg details and book. Sratajet accepts Apple Pay in an effort to make checkout seamless as well.

JetSmarter will not be Sratajet's only competitor, as private jet firms are also providing their own technological tools on mobile and desktop to make the private flying experience as easy as possible.

For instance, private aviation firm Sentient Jet has released a mobile booking app in which users can get instant access to real-time flight information.

Sentient's mobile app supports its recent growth, as it just completed its record-breaking summer in which it saw its best performing sales since 2007, and has undergone a brand redesign. The new app allows Sentient cardholders to book private planes in real-time with accurate quotes, ratings features, flight information and reports, customer service live chat and geo-location push notifications ([see more](#)).

The private jet firm may have more control with its app compared to booking platforms such as JetSmarter and Sratajet.

"Most of these apps are marketing hype," Mr. Gollan said. "When you use Uber, you make a trip request, and digitally, within seconds or minutes, a driver accepts your request and picks you up.

"So far, nobody has been able to close the circle in private aviation that I've seen," he said. "Behind the scenes, pricing, scheduling and owner approval are all still a manual process."

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