

The process of locating, purchasing and selling rotatable and consumable aircraft parts has been made easier by the availability of on-line trading portals. These have similar functionality based on simple part number searches, and are available either free or at a low subscription cost.

On-line spares buying & trading portals

There are a number of websites and on-line portals that are designed to simplify the process of searching for, acquiring and selling rotatable and consumable aircraft and engine components.

These websites are used globally, allowing buyers and vendors worldwide to use them to trade material. Each site lists million of rotatable and consumable parts for civil, military, general aviation, and business aircraft and helicopters, and their associated engines.

Vendors enter their inventory as available on a website. Buyers, which are mainly airlines and aircraft operators, and maintenance repair and overhaul (MRO) facilities, type in key information, usually a part number, to find the component they want. They are then provided with a list of vendors that have the part available. Buyers can then make requests for quotes (RFQs).

Website providers

Several websites dominate the on-line spares trading market, including: Inventory Locator Service (ILS), Component Control, PartsBase, Aviall, and VAS Aero Services.

The websites these providers offer are:

- ILS: www.ilsmart.com
- Component Control: www.stockmarket.aero
- PartsBase: www.partsbase.com
- Aviall: www.aviall.com
- VAS: www.apo.aero

Many of these portals charge no subscription or user fees to either buyers or sellers. The main function is to provide an on-line marketplace to allow thousands of vendors to list and advertise parts from their available inventories. In some cases, component repair facilities can also advertise or list their capabilities.

ILS provides its ilsmart.com website free of charge to buyers and vendors of material. It was established in 1979, and since 1994 has been using the internet as the technology to conduct transactions. "We provide a search-and-find facility for buyers, and we do not get involved in shipping, ownership or repair of the parts," says Jeff Jurge, director of marketing at ILS. "We also do not charge or take any percentage of the value of a transaction as a sales commission. All financial and logistical issues are between the buyers and sellers. Our only function is to make searches and transactions possible via our portal. We also provide training to help new companies to get set up on the system."

ILS charges a monthly flat fee to buyers and sellers; this fee depends on the number of users in an organisation that can log on at the same time.

Component Control specialises in providing IT systems that revolve around the management of parts, including their repair. It provides two main systems. The first is Quantum Control. Quantum Control is an ERP system for managing maintenance, but specialises in managing the repair process of components and sub-assemblies.

The second of Component Control's IT systems is its website www.stockmarket.aero. The site has 3,000 registered vendors and is used by about 35,000 buyers. It is available free of charge to both. "We do not take any subscription fees or commissions from vendors or buyers," says Z Baron, chief executive officer at Component Control. "We generate revenue from advertising that is placed by some of the vendors. The adverts are strategically placed on a part search results page, and are similar to adverts placed by companies in the printed yellow pages and telephone directories. The advert makes a particular vendor more prominent when a buyer

submits a request."

Buyers and vendors have to register on www.stockmarket.aero before using the system.

Partsbase's portal www.partsbase.com provides the same basic service as other websites. "The system lists about 126 million line items at any one time, and has about 7,700 members, including about 5,500 vendors" says Adrian Viller, regional director at Partsbase. "Buyers and vendors subscribe to the system. There are a lot of variables that determine the actual subscription fee, but it averages about \$3,000 per year. This fee includes the provision of three user IDs, so that three people can use the system simultaneously. The system lists available inventory, as well as repair shops that have the capability for each part."

Parts search

The parts search facilities on all portals follow the same basic functionality. After a user has logged in with their ID, they are taken to the first parts search page. Here basic information can be entered. The designs between each of the portals varies slightly.

On Component Control's www.stockmarket.aero the system restricts buyers only to the vendors that it is approved to use. This is determined first by the country in which the user is based. "A user starts by entering a part number, after which a list of different vendors that have the part available appears on the screen," says Baron. "This will list the basic information, such as the quantity available, their repair capability, and their location. It is therefore up to vendors to constantly update the information on all the parts they have available. This will have to be done manually, since they will probably use several portals."

be ordered if required,” says Viller. “NS denotes ‘New surplus’. It will be material that is being sold by brokers, and so may not have complete back-to-birth traceability.”

There are other parameters users can use to refine searches.

“Once the search results list is shown, the user can refine it by sorting according to quantity available, maintenance condition, vendors’ location by alphabetical order, and the price of parts. The price is actually rarely shown in the search listing,” says Viller. “On our system the user can specify countries they are interested in at the initial stage. This is because buyers may have concerns with transit times, and so may only want to specify their own country, or neighbouring ones in their searches.”

Stockmarket.aero allows users to specify the condition of the items they are looking for, the number or quantity they want, and when the parts are needed by. “Priority level or a time limit of when the parts are needed by is a major consideration for most buyers,” explains Baron. “The buyer can therefore state whether the parts are needed for AOG situations, and therefore an emergency, or required less urgently.”

ILS has a similar sorting system, where the user can order the list of parts available by distance, quantity,

maintenance condition, or by particular vendors.

Another facility that partsbase.com has for refining the basic list of available parts is for the user to tick a box for each particular vendor it is interested in. This preference is down to the user, but can be because of distance, quantity available, or other factors. The search can be refined to make a shortlist of the selected vendors. “This is by ticking a selection box by each vendor in the list,” says Viller. “The final instruction is for the buyer to state the number of parts that they need. At this stage the system generates a summary of the selected suppliers, and the quantity and maintenance status of the stock they have available.”

Request for quote

Once a list of available parts has been provided by the system, the user can send an RFQ to all the relevant or selected vendors.

“At this stage the user can send a message to each vendor. ilsmart.com has the functionality for the user to tell each vendor how many days they have to reply, the latest date by which they need the parts delivered, and the priority status,” says Jurge. “The priority status categories are AOG, routine, critical or

expedite. Critical is more urgent than expedite.

“Once the user has filled in this information, all selected vendors get an e-mail message or a fax asking them to send a quote to the buyer,” continues Jurge. “Vendors’ replies can be sent to the buyer either directly or via ilsmart.com. While part prices may not be listed on the search list generated at the initial search, vendors may privately quote the price of available stock when they reply to a buyer’s RFQ.”

On partsbase.com the user can select a response by date, and a lead time of the number of days after issuing a purchase order that it needs to receive the part.

Once a user has sent out an RFQ on partsbase.com, they will be sent a tracking number that is unique to that RFQ. “The user can request any extra information from a buyer, such as the FAA 8130 form or EASA Form 1 documents, and the equivalent certificates for other parts of the world where relevant,” says Viller. “Once the user has sent out an RFQ, they will automatically receive responses that can be viewed in a summary screen. This function is a bit like an in-box of incoming quotes. Most vendors reply by e-mail, but some do contact buyers via the portal, or even provide an automatic response, and an auto quote facility.”

Not just a venue to buy and sell parts!

ILS provides a marketplace for buying and selling aviation parts and services, but we also offer more to help you do business.

- Comprehensive analytical reports to help make informed business decisions
- Supply and demand data to set more accurate pricing
- Cross reference to discover alternate part numbers and procurement data
- Web Services to streamline and automate business process
- New Auction service to help move excess inventory

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Offices: Atlanta, Boston, Dallas, Dubai, Frankfurt, Istanbul, London, Los Angeles, Miami, New Delhi, New York, Paris, Philadelphia, Phoenix, San Diego, Seattle, Shanghai, Singapore, and St. Louis

Send RFQ

RFQ

To use the new, "Print Ready / Fax Ready" RFQ Form - click on the Fax Machine Icon below

Print Out Company Name	CC FN	Qty	Description	Phone	Fax
Adrian Miller Supply Co. Ltd	SK 0142	1	BATTERY	44-90-496-2000	44-159-000988
London Aircraft - Gloucester	SK 0012	1	BATTERY	302705 3405	303 388 2111
AMADON PROCESSERS, INC	0-242	1	BATTERY DRY	205-600-9408	301-696-2250
Aviation Supply Limited	SK 0012	1	Battery, Dry Dry	11-800-313-8300	44-159-440-3300
Global Parts Ltd	SK 0-242	1	BATTERY, WHITE TAES, ER23A1F	305-411-9098	310-483-4200
APZ Aviation Park Center	SK 0012	1	Battery	19-281-167211	45-203-407211
Aviation Computer Co.	SK 00096-1-1	1	BATTERY DRY	204-425-2011	514-284-2114
Werner Aviation	SK 0-242	1	BATTERY DRY	030331 3888 or 030 330 534 4103	

Response by Date: May 17 2014

Lead Time: 30 days (except RFQ)

RFQ Tracking Number:

General RFQ Comments:

Additional features

Each portal has additional features over the basic parts search and RFQ processes. Component Control's stockmarket.aero has a feature called 'broadcast message'. "If the user clicks on the 'broadcast message' tab or button on the web page, they will see a list of companies that are currently offering the part number they want," says Baron. "Similarly, if a user posts the availability of a certain part number then they are shown a list of companies that are already looking for that part number. The broadcast message facility therefore operates like a message board for buyers and sellers."

ILS has several business analytics functions on ilsmart.com. "This involves several functions," explains Jurge. "The first is that the user or browser may want to look for information regarding a part that has two applications. This is standard for consumables, but a battery, for example, can be used on several aircraft types."

Partsbase.com has several cross-reference functionalities that are similar. The partsbase.com portal has a US master cross-reference library (US MCRL) as part of its functionality. This is a database of about 25 million different part numbers. The US MCRL function can be used to help find alternate part numbers for a particular part number. It can also be used to find different types of part that use the same part number, or a piece of the same part number within a part number.

"There can be a part number, for example AS100, that is used on several types of parts," explains Viller. "Entering the part number, and clicking on the

MCRL button on the search page will provide the user with a list of the different types of part that use AS100, such as damping fluid, adhesive tape, and a hydraulic hose. The user then chooses the appropriate part, for example damping fluid. By doing this, the user avoids being bombarded with a list of all types of available parts, and receives just the available supply of damping fluid. The list will also quote the same type of damping fluid that uses a different part number. The system therefore provides a refined search compared to the basic search."

Another main issue is buyers that are searching for parts manufacturer approval (PMA) rotables and consumables. These are alternatives to OEM parts that have the same function, and regulatory approval, but have a lower list price. Buyers may wish to search for PMA parts that are an alternative to an OEM part. In some cases an OEM part is no longer manufactured, and a PMA is the only alternative.

"Using the PMA cross-reference facility allows the user to see what part numbers, if any, are PMA part number alternatives," says Jurge.

Partsbase.com has a feature that lists OEM part numbers in green and PMA ones in red. "The user can choose both OEM and PMA parts in its RFQ so that it can compare prices," says Viller. "The user can click on the PMA statistics to see a summary of the different PMA and OEM part numbers available for a particular part, and details about what the part is used for." Partsbase.com's PMA search facility provides about two million alternative part numbers for OEM parts.

Once the user has refined their search and chosen particular vendors they are potentially interested in acquiring from, they can then submit RFQs. Details can be added to the RFQs, such as the deadline for replying and shipping the requested material.

Repair capability

Another main issue for buyers is finding shops that have the repair and overhaul capability for the part numbers they are searching for.

"A user searching in ilsmart.com for a part number that is already in the system can just click on the MRO capability button, to be provided with a list of shops with the repair capability for that part," says Jurge.

A similar facility is available on partsbase.com. "With a part number entered for a search, the user can request list of repair shops rather than available inventory," says Viller. "The list of shops with repair and overhaul capability provides turnaround times for the three levels of repair of test, repair and overhaul. The list also has links to each shop's approval certificates."

Transaction process

The prime purpose of most of these portals is to provide buyers and sellers with information, and so allow them to contact each other. Once the buyer has sent an RFQ and the vendors have replied with relevant information, the portals have little or no other involvement in the transactions. "We are purely a locator service, and have nothing to do with the financial transactions between buyers and sellers," says Jurge. "This is purely a matter for them."

While the invoicing and financial elements of a purchase and sale can be performed by the buyers and vendors, Component Control's Quantum Control M&E system can be used to manage this process if they are also users of this system. Component Control itself, however, does not get involved in the financial transaction or shipping of the parts, and does not get a sales commission.

Several on-line portals do offer training for users, and Partsbase provides one-on-one continuous training and customer support, as well as help for members when required.

Spares trading portals all have similar functionality, and they are an essential tool for technical purchasers.

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