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Safety Special : Wi-Fi – for whom the bell tolls

Wi-Fi – for whom the bell tolls :

It all starts with the aeronautical misadventure recounted by our colleagues on the *New Zealand Herald*: an Airbus A330-300 in flight plunged more than 300 feet for no apparent reason. **Alerted by a previous incident last July that was supposedly provoked by interference from a cordless mouse, this time the investigators are turning their attention to the passengers and are looking for someone who might have been using an item of wireless equipment.** It should be said that the fate of an airline is all too often decided by the thoughtlessness of its passengers.

Airbus, being cautious, says it is "awaiting the results of the enquiry", which means that no official word will be pronounced in less than 6 months at least, given the speediness of the experts in such cases.

The A330-300 and similar models have all the same been flying for a good few years - since 1993 to be exact. If the few milliwatts of a cordless mouse or a Wi-Fi key were enough to send 180 tons of metal and sophisticated electronics plunging to earth, hordes of Al Qaeda members would be the favourite clients of Logitech, and the "Human Interface" division at Microsoft would be setting up factories somewhere between Baghdad and Kandahar.

This also devalues the safeguards for resistance to electromagnetic interference that determine the rating of the least electronic gadget that might be taken on board a modern plane.

And then, according to the rumours started by a few unkind tongues, mobile phones, for a long time considered as mortally dangerous on board an aeroplane, are more and more often accepted in planes in flight.

What's more, since the introduction of on-board micro-antennas, their use, charged per minute of communication, **has with the wave of a wand put an end to the enormous hazards that could be caused just by switching on a wi-fi laptop.**

The image contains two identical side-by-side panels. Each panel features a blue square logo with a globe and the text "BioInitiative EMF CEM". To the right of the logo is text in English: "It is vitally necessary to take effective action to make all the various sources of electrosmog compatible with human health." To the right of the second panel is text in French: "Il y a impérieuse nécessité d'aller à l'essentiel en agissant pour rendre toutes les sources d'immixtion de l'électrosmog compatibles avec la santé humaine." Below the logos are two digital meters. The left meter has "IMMÉDIATEMENT" written above it and displays "0.1 μW/cm²" and "0.6 V/m". The right meter also has "IMMÉDIATEMENT" written above it and displays "0.1 μW/cm²" and "0.6 V/m". Below each meter is a blue "CLICK" button.