

The seamless journey: what the future holds for airports

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TRAVEL

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Biometrics and identity management systems have sprung up in several airports. These technological innovations are transforming for the better the passenger experience at airports.

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4.3 billion. That's how many passengers were transported in 2018, according to the latest ICAO statistics . These statistics have been steadily increasing for years and are even set to double by 2030. However, while travelling should be synonymous with relaxing, the passenger experience at airports very often falls short. Never-ending queues at airport checkpoints make this experience a difficult one to appreciate. Nevertheless, things are looking up and brand new technological innovations have sprung up in several airports and points of entry.

The seamless journey

A few years ago, navigating around an airport without having to pull out your passport or boarding pass at every checkpoint would have been considered a sweet dream. Today, it is a reality in several airports around the world, where biometrics and identity management systems are used as allies to allow travelers to enjoy seamless traveling. Changi Airport in Singapore stands out as a great example of an airport able to reinvent itself and provide its travelers with an enjoyable journey. Together with IDEMIA, the Changi Airport Group managed to cut wait times, improve the overall passengers' experience and shine on the international stage as the world's best airport for the seventh consecutive year . The advantages carry over to the passengers, the airports and the airlines.

Advantages on every front

For travelers, their airport journey will be stress-free, smoother and faster. No bottlenecks, no downtime and no pulling

out your boarding credentials every 3 minutes. Instead, IDEMIA's groundbreaking technology will capture the passenger's biometrics (face, iris, fingerprints) and retrieve it at every checkpoint (security, self bag drop, boarding, lounge area etc.)

For airports, a smooth journey allows staff to locate passengers, which reduces processing times at departure and arrival, improving aircraft turnarounds. It also increases the quality of service and security as well as the airports' ranking. For airlines, IDEMIA's high-tech solution means loyal, happy passengers and fewer delays, as it speeds up passenger processing at boarding.

However, private stakeholders have to be aware of the risks involved concerning the processing of passengers' data.

Security and privacy

A passenger's biometrics constitute private and sensitive data that airports and airlines have to treat with utmost security. The 2018 data leaks of two leading actors in the social networking sector impacted more than 90 million users. Such breaches can have devastating effects on a business' reputation, notwithstanding the dramatic economic downfall it can cause. For passengers, having their data breached could lead to fraud and potential identity theft.

Yet, 65% of passengers are willing to share additional personal information (address of destination, picture, etc.) to speed up processing at airports, 45% of air travelers choose biometric identification as a replacement of their passports, and 56% would like to be able to track their baggage. If numbers never lie, these show that there is a necessity for expansion of a seamless journey. Changi Airport's partnership with IDEMIA proved that technology is fundamental in making everybody's lives as stress-free as possible, while providing private stakeholders and passengers with the security and peace of mind they deserve. Time to get onboard and let the seamless journey take us where we need to go!

¹ <https://news.gtp.gr/2019/01/09/icao-global-air-passenger-growth-solid-2018/>

² <http://www.changiairport.com/corporate/media-centre/newsroom.html#/pressreleases/changi-airport-is-named-the-worlds-best-airport-for-the-seventh-consecutive-year-by-international-air-travellers-2853166>

³ <https://www.iata.org/events/gaps/Documents/morning-seamless-journey.pdf>
