

How IDEMIA will support the travel industry in 2022

Digital transformation, contactless interactions, health risk assessments—the resilience of the travel industry in the face of the pandemic comes with many changes. Let us explore how these changes can help unlock the traveler experience of tomorrow.

TRAVEL

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In the face of the pandemic, the air travel industry has shown great resilience by reinventing itself. IDEMIA, a longstanding partner of airports, airlines and border authorities, has used its technological expertise to help transform recent challenging times into an opportunity to unlock the travel experience of tomorrow. We sat down with Emmanuel Wang, VP Marketing Border Control and Passenger Facilitation, and Nicolas Phan, Border Control and Passenger Facilitation Market Manager to discuss the challenges that lie ahead, and how IDEMIA can continue to support the travel industry with its transformation.

The digital transformation of the travel industry is in full swing, how is IDEMIA supporting this revolution?

Emmanuel Wang: The travel industry has recently faced many challenges, and despite the numerous restrictions, it has demonstrated great adaptability; the **continuous digital transformation** is proof of that. As we start the year, we know that the challenges of the pandemic will not simply disappear. More than ever, the goal is to offer a safer and smoother travel experience, ensuring stress-free journeys for passengers.

In this context, IDEMIA is supporting the travel industry to prepare itself for the future. One of the areas that needs to be addressed in 2022, is the development of contactless solutions. We are pioneers in the **development of contactless biometrics** and we introduced several high-tech products—even before the pandemic. An example is our self-service kiosk, TravelKiosk, which offers a fully touchless process, including biometric capture and interaction with the equipment for the immigration pre-check. These types of technology will **reassure passengers that it is safe to travel again**, and this is a field in which we **continue to innovate**. We are currently developing the new generation of iris, face and fingerprint capture solutions. I cannot divulge too much for the moment. However, what I can say is that we are working on **making the devices smarter and more efficient to offer travelers an enhanced user experience**.

Nicolas Phan: Travelers have to provide documents prior to their trip such as the electronic travel authorization (eTA), passenger locator forms, a health travel pass, etc. This is a long list that has been added to because of the pandemic. The objective is to **facilitate traveler's life** so that they can **submit all the documents from the comfort of their home**, and arrive at the airport ready to fly. Such an approach will not only be more convenient for travelers, but it will also support the decision-making process of the various stakeholders. By having early access to this information, airlines can ensure that only travelers that comply with the regulations are allowed to board. It will also help border authorities to identify travelers that potentially present a sanitary and/or security risk.

Last, but not least, **passports will soon be digitalized too**. IDEMIA, along with the ICAO, is working on the

development of the Digital Traveler Credential (DTC). The DTC will allow border agencies, port operators and carriers to improve their efficiency while providing a safe and smooth travel experience. Ease of use and contactless interactions are two of the main benefits of the DTC for travelers. Substantial progress with regard to the DTC was achieved in November 2020, through the ICAO's endorsement of the self-derived DTC: DTC Type 1. In 2022, we are expecting the ICAO to approve the specifications regarding the physical component defined in DTC Type 2 and 3. Once available, the DTC will take the digitalization of travel one-step further.

In addition to contactless technologies, what other elements need to be considered to improve the traveler experience?

Emmanuel Wang: We can never say it enough: **privacy and ease of use.** The increase of digitalization across various domains has led users to consent to temporarily sharing their personal data. Privacy is IDEMIA's priority. As experts in biometrics, we know that **personal data is extremely sensitive and must be protected at all times**, and that is exactly what we do! All our solutions are developed in accordance with the principle "data security by design" and we will continue to do so.

Nicolas Phan: As for ease of use, there is a focus on **automated, self-service solutions** for facilitation and sanitary reasons. Some travelers may believe that self-service solutions might be complicated, especially if you are jetlagged, or not so tech-savvy. This is why IDEMIA puts a lot of effort into extremely **intuitive interfaces** for our solutions. At IDEMIA, we have an in-house team of UX experts that are heavily involved in the design of our products, guaranteeing a smooth user experience.

We often associate digital transformation with air borders, but what about land and sea borders?

Nicolas Phan: Good point! Modernizing the infrastructure of land and sea borders will probably be one of the biggest challenges over the next few years. **Their digital transformation is underway**, but not at the same pace as air borders, as they are difficult to standardize, and involve a variety of use cases. There are some initiatives that are currently being deployed. One example is the solution that IDEMIA successfully deployed at various seaports for the Royal Caribbean Cruise Line in the USA. We support both the carrier and the border authority with a biometric identification system as part of the disembarkation process to re-enter the USA after a cruise. The **results have been very positive**; the processing time is three times less than what it was!

Emmanuel Wang: To address the modernization of land and sea borders, there needs to be a focus on **innovation and customization.** It is essential to take into account the various transport modalities, available infrastructure, and the variety of traveler profiles. **A one-size-fits-all approach is not a viable option.** There are some large-scale train stations and seaports that can implement solutions that are being used at airports, but **mobile solutions would probably be the best bet** for the specificities of land and sea borders. We believe that SDK modules that can be easily embedded into border guards' smartphones and multi-biometric tablets are optimal solutions to increase their mobility on the field.

Due to the pandemic, a new health element has been added to the risk assessments performed on travelers. How can the industry help governments?

Emmanuel Wang: There is no doubt traveler risk assessments will be at the core of border management. Traveler risk assessments were traditionally based on the analysis of Advanced Passenger Information and Passenger Name Record

(API-PNR) data. However, the pandemic has highlighted other needs and in the future they may well **incorporate health certificates and other relevant data such as eTA and pre-arrival forms**. Of course, this must be done by specific government agencies in full compliance with privacy regulations.

A convenient and secure option would be to link health certificates and eTA to the traveler's DTC. This will enable government agencies to **perform the necessary checks prior to a traveler's arrival**. In addition, the government would benefit from better quality data, and a decrease in errors and cases of intentional data manipulation.

Nicolas Phan: The industry has a key role to play here. The main objective is to propose a risk assessment solution that can **collect data from different sources and analyze it in compliance with the regulations** defined by the stakeholders for security and health purposes. These solutions need to be more agile; a **cloud-based solution** is something that should be considered to limit costs and allow more countries to conduct effective assessments.

What are IDEMIA's key projects for the travel industry for 2022?

Emmanuel Wang: We have many ongoing projects all over the world. For the **European Entry/Exit System**, we will deliver the projects won and will continue to support Member States to comply with European regulations. We will also continue to participate in **passenger facilitation projects around the world**. Our expertise in biometrics and identity management is key in enabling airlines and airports to offer travelers a pleasant experience.

Nicolas Phan: The demand for biometric-based solutions for border control, and a streamlined passenger experience are on the rise. What is clear is that **in the case of a pandemic, border control is the first line of defense of a country**, and we expect governments to continue investing in this in 2022, carrying on from 2021. The same goes for the biometric passenger journey at airports. We are currently in talks with various operators that intend to **propose a contactless, biometric journey to reassure travelers**. A lot is being done to ensure a recovery of the industry and IDEMIA is there to support!