Customer service is top of mind for airport management and a key priority area for ACI. New technologies help airports to transition from labour intensive operations to speedier, more accurate, methods. They have also helped make significant strides in simplifying passenger travel. Backed by airports, airlines, government agencies and technology providers, the ‘SPT’ programme has the ingredients for more efficient use of terminal space, reduced passenger processing times and better use of staff in providing customer service.

Objective

The objective of the Simplifying Passenger Travel programme is to improve aviation security and facilitation while enhancing the passenger’s air travel experience.

Issue

In light of the growing air traffic requirements as well as the increased focus on security and facilitation, the current processes are not sufficient to meet check-in, security and border clearance requirements. Unless the situation is addressed, growth in travel will be severely affected, borders will become increasingly difficult to control, and vulnerabilities inherent in the travel network will be exploited.

Solution

Airlines, airports, handling agents, government authorities, technology providers and all concerned stakeholders need to work closely together to shape a more intelligent and simplified travel continuum, move passengers more smoothly and securely, and do so with maximum efficiency and minimum cost.

The SPT is a unique initiative led by airlines, airports, governments and technology providers. The group proposes a “win-win” solution called the Ideal Process Flow, which combines new-generation passports, biometrics, and advanced telecommunications capabilities with the existing infrastructure to automatically authenticate a passenger’s identity worldwide. The SPT concept enables passengers to move through the system seamlessly, freeing up staff to concentrate on security threats and customer service.

Current environment

Key technical components such as self-service kiosks, passport readers and data networks are already in place. New international standards for passports have been adopted, and biometric technologies are coming into widespread use. SPT members have conducted a series of feasibility trials and programme implementations in Europe, North America, and the Asia-Pacific region.

Results indicate that travellers fully support the use of the new technologies and processes that speed up check-in, security, and border clearance. These first stages of introducing SPT into mainstream operations are being closely tracked to ensure that the benefits are achievable and costs are clearly identified.

Goal

A fully implemented SPT solution will bring benefits to the entire community – passengers, airlines, airports and governments, through the convergence of vision, technology and co-operation. It is the goal of SPT to develop solutions that promote simplified and automated passenger travel that ultimately lead to sustained, convenient and secure air-travel.
What is the SPT programme?
The Simplifying Passenger Travel (SPT) programme is an initiative that aims to facilitate the passenger’s air travel experience by reducing time and hassle by creating more efficient processes without compromising security requirements of air travel.

What makes up the SPT programme?
The SPT programme has a board with representation from international associations. The SPT also has over 70 airports, airlines, government authorities, travel agents and technology suppliers that make up an SPT Interest Group (SPTIG).

What are the key objectives of the SPT programme?
The key objectives for the SPT programme are to:
- Reduce barriers to travel that stand in the way of economic growth
- Ensure that security concerns are met
- Make optimal use of staff and facilities within budget constraints
- Reduce costs and improve revenues
- Ensure a pleasant and efficient travel experience for the traveling public

Each year, the volume of international passenger travel continues to increase yet airport space and immigration services are not necessarily expanding at the same pace. How will this affect air travel?
If security and facilitation improvements are not implemented, there will be increased congestion at airports, further delays and time wasted, increased hassle and stress, less secure and less thorough processes and possibly increased costs: departures fees, taxes etc.

What is the SPT programme proposing?
The SPT has developed a concept called the Ideal Process Flow. This concept combines new-generation passports, biometrics, and advanced telecommunications capabilities with the existing infrastructure to facilitate the automatic authentication of a passenger’s identity whenever required at different stages in the travel process. SPT fundamentally changes the current passenger-processing model from a series of discrete processes to a model that enables stakeholders to share information and dramatically improve the passenger’s experience as a result.

How do passengers benefit if SPT processes are implemented?
The implementation of SPT will result in a significantly improved travel experience for the passenger:
- Passengers would spend less time queuing at the airport for check-in, security and government authority controls.
- Passengers would not have to arrive and the airport 2-3 hours early to check-in.
- Passengers would have the choice to check-in in different locations such as the office, home, hotel, railway station etc.
- Passengers’ information required for international travel can be provided before travelling to the airport.
- Security will be improved by using biometrics and automation.
- Arrival processes will be simplified with less queuing

How do airports benefit if SPT processes are implemented?
- Kiosk-based services, particularly of the Common Use Self Service variety (C USS), allow existing facilities to accommodate a much greater volume of passenger traffic, and thus defer the need for expensive expansion programmes.
- New facilities that are designed to incorporate automated passenger processes can be optimised (i.e. cheaper) when compared to those built around traditional manual handling systems.
- Faster and more efficient processes in turn affect the airport bottom line: travellers have more time to shop and engage in other commercial activities at the airport, and the friendlier, quicker travel experience encourages repeat customers who are no longer put off by long lines and service delays.
- Automation of services, e.g. contributing to lower minimum connection times, can be an important differentiator for airports that are in competition for a bigger market share.

How do government authorities benefit if SPT processes are implemented?
- Trusting passenger identification to automated, biometric-based processes frees up border control resources from routine tasks to concentrate on critical enforcement challenges.
- Changing the focus from 100% staffed inspection to a mix that routes low-risk travellers through automated channels provides new flexibility to control authorities who are short on staff and lack adequate coverage for border interdiction operations.
- Partnering with other States to adopt common processes based on SPT Ideal Process Flows will establish a critical mass of expertise; contribute to further process improvements; and lower investments required by individual States.
- Involving other stakeholders in the process of gathering the information required for enrolment in automated clearance systems will reduce the transition time, minimise costs, and minimise impact on staff without eroding control of the border.

Special Interest Group:
Airports
- Airports de Paris
- Hong Kong Airport
- BAA
- Central Japan International
- Copenhagen Airports
- Fraport
- Luftfahrtverket - Swedish Civil Aviation Authority
- Manchester International
- Nanta Airpor Authority
- Port Authority of NY & NJ
- Singapore Changi Airport
- Unique Flughafen Zurich
- Vancouver International

Airlines and Ground Handlers
- Air France
- All Nippon Airways
- British Airways
- Cathay Pacific Airlines
- Emirates
- Japan Airlines
- KLM
- Lufthansa
- Qantas Airways
- SAS
- Star Alliance Services
- Swiss International Airlines
- Swissport
- Virgin Atlantic Airways

Governments
- Australia
- Bahrain
- Canada
- Chile
- China
- France
- Hong Kong
- Japan
- Netherlands
- New Zealand
- Singapore
- UAE
- United Kingdom
- United States

Technology Suppliers
- 3M
- Accenture
- ARINC
- Boeing
- Datel
- EOS
- Identix
- IER
- Iridian Technologies
- Lufthansa Systems
- National Biometric Security Project
- NTT Data Corporation
- Panasonic
- Raytheon
- Sabre
- SAGEM
- Securitas
- SITA
- Verified Identity Pass