

Simplifying Passenger Travel

Interest Group: miSense
Biometrics Trial


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In October 2006, Accenture, in partnership with eight other members of IATA's Simplifying Passenger Travel Interest Group, began a pilot project at Heathrow aimed at proving the use of biometrics to improve identity security and enhance passenger experience. Early indications are that this type of solution has great potential.

Client background

The Simplifying Passenger Travel Interest Group was founded in February 2000 by the International Air Transport Association (IATA). It comprises a group of airlines, airports and ground handlers, government authorities and technology providers, including Accenture. The group's vision is to improve the passenger experience measurably and enhance security by implementing new technologies, sharing information among service providers, and enabling more efficient controls and services.

The United Kingdom Regional Group, comprising BAA and the UK Immigration Service, set out to pilot the Interest Group's Ideal Process Flow vision by using biometric cards, kiosks and gates to increase air travel security while improving the travel experience for passengers. The pilot, called miSense, runs until March 2007.

Business challenge

The airline industry today is striving to manage increased travel volumes and improve security in the face of organized crime, terrorism and identity theft—all while maintaining or improving the passenger experience. Accenture believes that these challenges can be overcome by bringing the key stakeholders together to streamline air travel processes and by leveraging biometrics to automate travelers' identity verification.

A recent survey showed that around 90 percent of UK air travelers supported the use of biometric scanning if it can be shown to make check-in quicker and safer. The miSense pilot being conducted at Heathrow's Terminal 3 does just that, by unifying today's disconnected, overlapping and manual processes and making passenger identification more accurate.

The pilot aims to prove the use of biometrics as a solution to:

- Improve passenger flow
- Reduce the costs of airlines, airports and border control authorities
- Enhance security

According to Stephen Challis, head of Product Development, BAA, "Heathrow is the world's busiest international airport with over 67 million passengers traveling through every year. In order to maintain a world-class passenger experience, we must continually look for ways to evolve our service. With miSense, we are investigating the very latest technologies, in collaboration with airlines and border control authorities, to improve passenger experience and identity security."

How we helped

Accenture and the Simplifying Passenger Travel Interest Group started operating the Heathrow pilot project, miSense, in October 2006.

The pilot is being conducted under the aegis of the BAA and the UK Immigration Service, with self-investment by selected Simplifying Passenger Travel Interest Group members, including Accenture and its research and development arm, Accenture Technology Labs. Accenture is leading the biometrics implementation as well as the business process and change management that is necessary to maximize the positive impact of this technology. Other participants include IER, Raytheon Systems, Sagem, SITA, Emirates and Cathay Pacific.

The pilot is taking place at Heathrow Airport (Terminal 3) with voluntary, free participation by European Economic Area passengers on Cathay Pacific flights to Hong Kong and Emirates flights to Dubai.

Phase one was deployed in October 2006, and involves scanning departing passengers' passports and a single fingerprint at a miSense kiosk at check in. Thereafter, fingerprint and boarding pass scanners allow access to the departure lounge (via the normal security checks) and priority boarding.

Phase two, known as "miSenseplus," was rolled out in November 2006. It expands the use of biometric technology, capturing a facial image, 10 fingerprints, two iris images and passport information for the issue of biometric, registered traveler smart-cards for any passenger flying out of Terminal 3. Once vetted by the UK Immigration Service, miSenseplus passengers are granted permission to use automated gates on arrival from

any destination. Passengers flying on Cathay Pacific or Emirates can also benefit from the automated security departure gate, and priority boarding. Additionally, by linking together the Government Immigration Services of the UK and Hong Kong, miSenseplus creates an international automated fast track immigration clearance on arrival and departure from Hong Kong.

With the miSense pilot, Accenture is drawing upon its extensive research and development into the business application of biometrics technology. Specifically, Accenture's Travel Security Services solution plays a central role in the pilot. It brings together biometrics, e-passports and contactless smartcards, kiosks, automated gates, and mobile devices to improve air travel security and passenger experience.

Having enrolled in miSense himself, Liam Byrne, UK Minister for Immigration, said: "Biometric ID systems are fundamental to securing our borders in a more mobile age. They are crucial to our plans for counting everyone in and out of the country. This proof of concept shows just how well the technology can work."

High performance delivered

Although the pilot is still under way, it is already demonstrating how it can help airlines, airports and government agencies on their journey toward high performance.

The benefits for passengers, airlines, airports and border control authorities include:

- **Better travel experience:** Passengers get faster service and more control through self-service, better time predictability at the airport, and more time to relax in the departure lounge.

- **Cost savings:** For both airlines, airports and border control authorities, greater volumes of passengers can be processed more efficiently, within existing or smaller facilities.
- **Greater security:** Automated kiosks and gates perform the activity of verifying identity more effectively, while releasing scarce resources for higher value activities such as security screening, intelligence investigations, facilitation and customer service. Governments gain greater control over who crosses their borders without drastically increasing the costs of policing.
- **Increased profitability:** Airports can increase profitability by maximizing use of scarce space, ensuring efficient passenger throughput and locating the airport's retail outlets in the best places to improve profitability for airports and shops.

"Accenture Technology Labs is focused on helping companies apply new technologies in pursuit of high performance," says Cyrille Bataller, who leads Accenture's biometrics research and development activities. "With the miSense pilot, we are using biometric technologies to integrate disconnected processes, eliminate duplication, increase efficiency through automation, and enhance passenger experience. It delivers benefits to all parties involved."

Contact us to find out how Accenture Travel Security Services can help your organization use biometrics to achieve high performance.

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Accenture Technology Labs, the dedicated technology research and development (R&D) organization within Accenture, has been turning technology innovation into business results for 20 years. The Labs create a vision of how technology will shape the future and invent the next wave of cutting-edge business solutions. Working closely with Accenture's global network of specialists, Accenture Technology Labs helps clients innovate to achieve high business performance. The Labs are located in Chicago, Illinois; Silicon Valley, California; Sophia Antipolis, France; and Bangalore, India. For more information, please visit our website at www.accenture.com/accenturetechlabs.

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