

“Face Biometrics” to Streamline Airline Passengers

Delta Airlines Partners with TSA on Face Biometrics

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[Delta](#) has recently partnered with the U.S. Transport Security Administration (TSA) to deploy face biometrics to streamline check-in and security in Atlanta, while Emirates suggested airline passengers will have to wear masks for at least two more years. Also, [SITA](#) argues for health credential checks to be integrated into travel ecosystems all around the globe.

Delta partners with TSA on biometrics for aviation

Thanks to the new partnership, passengers will be able to go through security checks at airports in Atlanta without a paper boarding pass or a physical government ID credential.

Instead, after registering via the [TSA](#) app and confirming their identity, customers will be able to have their faces scanned via facial verification cameras at the airport.

The scanning process encrypts passengers’ images, then sends them to the U.S. Customs and Border Protection’s (CBP) facial biometric matching service via a secure channel with no accompanying biographic data.

CBP then verifies a customer’s identity against government holdings and sends back an indicator to allow the customer to proceed.

Delta clarified that individuals who do not wish to utilize the system will be free to opt out.

[The new biometrics system](#) will first be visible in Atlanta’s South Security Checkpoint in the coming weeks and then expanded to bag drop and boarding areas before the end of the year. Delta also confirmed it aims to expand the technology’s deployment to additional hubs next year.

Emirates SVP suggests masks on planes for two more years

The case was made by Zack Zainal Abidin, senior vice president of Emirates Group Security,

at an aviation security conference in Dubai on Sunday.

[The National News](#) reported on the claims, which highlighted Abidin's warning on the likelihood of mask-free travel.

According to the executive, the pandemic still presents challenges for the aviation security sector.

Particularly, Abidin suggested facial recognition is not enough anymore, as threats, [including terrorism](#), become more sophisticated, and mask recognition is still not as accurate as traditional face biometrics systems.

Fingerprint recognition is also an issue, according to Abidin, since the need for physical distancing has made the biometric technology less safe for passengers.

"These are the new technologies that have to be explored and expanded, due to the conditions created by the pandemic," Abidin said.

SITA calls for increased health credential integration

Challenges to face biometrics are not the only one facing airport systems that may need to adapt. According to the air transport communications specialist, the need for passengers to provide health credentials during the pandemic is substantially reducing the capacity of airports, causing longer processing and waiting times.

"As we open up, it's imperative we integrate the multiple different ways of sharing health credentials digitally and seamlessly into a single approach for the world's travel eco-system," wrote Sherry Stein, head of Technology at [SITA Americas](#), in a [blog post](#).

According to the technology expert, this would be the only way to tackle the wait times at check-in, as well as restoring self-service to save time, confusion, and congestion for passengers.

"And, crucially, we can give travelers the assurance that wherever they venture in the world, they'll be allowed into the country and to return home," she explained.

To this end, SITA recently launched [Health Protect](#), an initiative aimed at integrating health status checks within airlines and airports' travel processes.

"Integration with SITA Health Protect will enable self-service check-in – be it by web, mobile, or kiosk – while advance passenger processing will verify that passengers have a trusted traveler credential and are allowed to board," Stein added.

The pandemic has had a devastating impact on our industry, according to Stein, and yet, it has also focused minds on accelerating digital progress.

"This is vital today, as we recover, and as we strive to enhance traveler convenience and operational excellence. But it will also increase [the resilience of our processes](#) should we face another epidemic or global pandemic in the future," she concluded.

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