A perspective from Asia on standardization

Listening to the Keynote at the [Virtual Expo](#) today, two stand-out comments stay with me as we trawl through the rest of this COVID-affected future.

The first is the excellent comment from [IATA's](#) Director General and CEO, Alexandre de Juniac. He comments that whilst we, as an industry, do all we can to harmonize and standardize the compliance systems for travel, until governments can get their acts together and agree on some universal method of managing this, it will be a very long haul. He's absolutely right. Here in Asia is a perfect example as no two countries have similar travel restrictions. Thailand and Malaysia are still imposing bizarre and totally unworkable protective measures which basically makes going there virtually impossible. Vietnam and Indonesia change the rules on a daily basis and Singapore is also at a loss as to how to manage arriving or transiting passengers.

The second stand-out comment came from the [Star Alliance](#) CEO Jeffrey Goh on the introduction of a utopian "seamless processing" via digital platforms based around facial recognition systems. In Asia, with one possible exception, this isn't going to happen any time soon - if ever.

I would have liked Jeffrey to accompany me on my flight this evening. A simple domestic affair from Kuala Lumpur to Penang required me to show some paper ID or other documentation at countless checkpoints.

For all the positive input from Apex, IATA and other agencies, unless Star Alliance has some magic formula that will get the Federal Police, Security Agencies, Airlines, their Subcontractors, Airport Authorities, Immigration, Duty Free and possibly the cleaning staff to all agree to the same system, there will be no chance of it working here.

I recall Jeffrey talking up this same dream at an FTE in Singapore a couple of years ago. We are no closer to this now than we were then. If anything, with the pandemic, it's worse. From the airport entrance to seat 3A I had to fumble for paperwork no less than eight times.

In the US, Australia/NZ and maybe parts of Europe it has a chance, possibly Singapore too. As for the rest of the world? And for this to work - it has to be at bother ends of the journey. Then there's Africa...