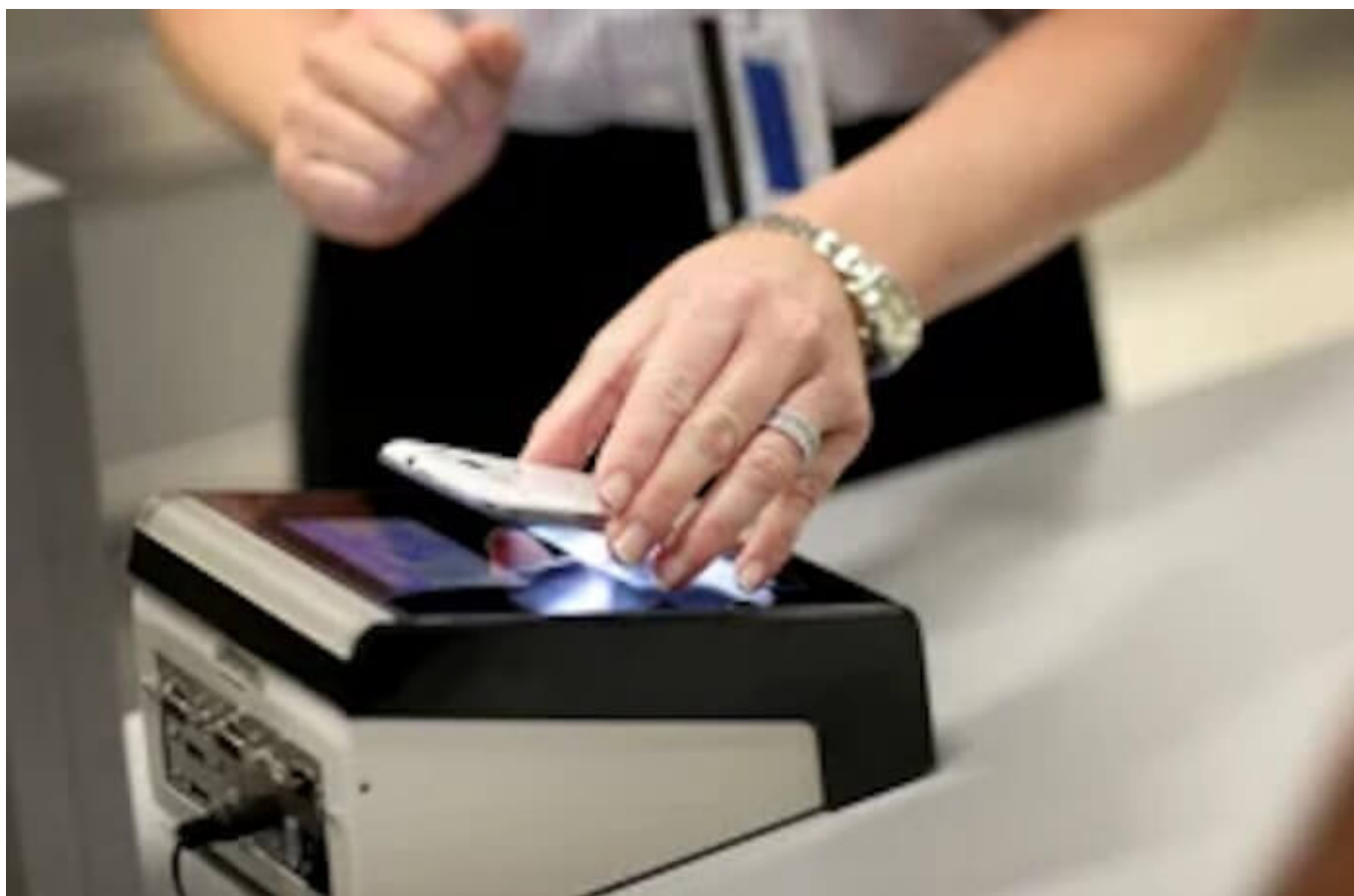


IATA and industry partners test first integrated digital identity travel experience



Passengers self-boarding

The International Air Transport Association ([IATA](#)) announced recently that alongside industry partners, it tested the first fully integrated digital identity travel experience, from shopping to arrival. The test was on a journey from London Heathrow ([LHR](#)) to Rome Fiumicino ([FCO](#)) with [British Airways](#), the press release said.

“Our vision for future travel is fully digital and secured with biometric identification. While the technology exists to do this at each stage of a journey, linking these steps together has proven challenging. Today with our partners we showed that it is possible. This will open up a world of possibilities for simpler journeys in the future,” said Nick Careen, IATA’s Senior Vice President for Operations, Safety and Security.

In its press release, IATA said that the journey from shopping to flights to arriving at the destination, all using digital identity, demonstrated the potential for future travel experiences using biometrics.

Biometrics and the future of travel

IATA’s press release shared several ways that digital identities and biometrics can shape the future of air travel.

- Personalized offers: Travellers will be able to receive curated offers through shopping channels. “The LHR-FCO passenger shared their loyalty card data (stored as a verifiable credential in their

smart phone's digital wallet) with a travel agent," the press release said. Then, the airline used [New Distribution Capability \(NDC\)](#) to make personalized offers through the travel agent channel

- Simplified order: Passenger Name Records (PNR), e-tickets or electronic miscellaneous documents are no longer required. All the information about the journey is stored in the verifiable credential, readable as a QR code
- Easier travel preparation: A digital wallet and digital passport verify the traveller's nationality and provide them with information about what travel documents they need before airport arrival. The press release said that IATA's Timatic solution supports this
- Simplifying check-ins: The LHR-FCO traveller chose to share their digital passport and order data with British Airways to receive a confirmation that they are Ready-to-Fly, the press release said. This meant they received a seat assignment via text message
- Contactless airport experiences: Sharing biometric data allows travellers to move through the airport hands-free with their phone, passport and wallet safely stored in a pocket or bag and their visual appearance serving as identification. In this instance, Biometric gates cleared the way for the LHR-FCO traveller through security, into lounges and onto the aircraft

"As an airline, we are always innovating and looking at ways to make the customer journey as seamless as possible. We introduced biometric boarding on selected flights earlier this year and it has been a huge success with positive customer feedback. Working with IATA on enabling a fully integrated travel journey helps us build on that and shows us what could be possible in the future," said Dirk John, British Airways Chief Information and Digital Officer.

According to the October 25 press release, the companies involved in the project included Accenture, Amadeus, Australian Border Force, AWS, Branchspace, British Airways, IDnow, Aeroporti di Roma, SICPA, Trip.com and Verchaska.

Transforming the travel experience

Modern Airline Retailing is a transparent process that is converting legacy ticketing processes to modern Offer and Order Standards. It uses a decentralized digital identity to create a streamlined travel experience for passengers.

"The goal is to create value for travellers by meeting their needs. Passengers want a personalized, seamless digital experience when shopping for air travel and they expect consistent service irrespective of whether they purchased their travel directly from the airline or via a third party. This is being achieved by modernizing decades old standards, processes and technology to the digital environment," said Muhammad Albakri, IATA's Senior Vice President for Financial Settlement and Distribution Services.

One ID uses digital identity and biometric technology to support the digitization of passports and eliminate the need for physical verification at the airport.

"In future, a smartphone storing a digital wallet that is loaded with your digital passport, loyalty cards and other verifiable travel credential[s], is all that will be needed to travel. Achieving that reality needs the kind of cooperation that we have demonstrated today with 11 companies coming together to facilitate the first fully integrated digital journey. Success, of course, is underpinned by interoperability and global standards—so the advantage of the digital travel conveniences are available to travellers throughout their journey and wherever it may take them," said Careen.

The IATA press release said that privacy is a top priority with passenger processing standards to protect personal data. Credentials are shared peer-to-peer (no third party) with the option to opt out for passengers who don't want to participate in this retailing experience.

Interoperability is essential for global acceptance and is ensured with alignment to the International Civil Aviation Organization's (ICAO) standards, including those for the Digital Travel Credential and Digital Travel Authorization, said the press release.

"Information from verifiable credentials is shared on a need-to-know basis. While a government may request detailed personal information to issue a visa or prove admissibility to travel, the only information that will be shared with the airline is that the traveller has a visa and which type. Passengers want complete control of their own data. And that is what they will get—in a travel experience that is secure, simple and convenient," said Careen.

The role of the IATA Innovation Lab

The LHR-FCO trip is a "Proof of Concept" developed in the IATA Innovation Lab, according to the press release. The Innovation Lab brings together players from across the travel value chain to test new technologies and develop modern solutions.

Albakri said, "Innovation is at the heart of the aviation industry, from exploring sustainable ways of flying to digitizing the passenger travel experience. Progress [is] firmly rooted in collaboration. The IATA Innovation Lab brings the industry together to find pioneering solutions, through harnessing the power of partnerships."