

Travel Trends

SMARInsights

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Major Trends Radically Changing the Passenger Travel Landscape

Passengers are reporting higher satisfaction with biometrics and digital identity usage in airport processing. According to the International Air Transport Association's 2025 Global Passenger Survey, half of passengers have used biometrics in some way during airport travel. They reported that 44% have used it at security, 41% have used it at exit immigration, and 35% have used it at entry immigration. 85% report being happy with the experience, and 74% are willing to adopt biometric information to skip passport and boarding pass checks.

Since 2022, the use of biometric information at air travel

checkpoints has risen 20 percentage-points.

Male travelers adopt digital and biometric changes more than women in the travel process. Younger travelers are the highest adopters, yet they are also more likely to want transparent privacy and security protocols.

North American travelers are the least satisfied with biometrics data usage in their travel process.

US Airports Push for More Biometric, Digital ID Technology

Despite lower satisfaction levels among North Americans regarding biometric adoption for travel purposes, individual US airlines and airports are in the early stages of testing enhanced digital ID and biometric programs.

A few examples include:

- Daniel K. Inouye International Airport in Honolulu, HI has begun using Enhanced Passenger Processing, which automatically takes photos of inbound US citizens to accelerate the screening process. According to their data, this has reduced wait times by 25% and processing times by 74%.
- Alaska Airlines has introduced automatic bag drops in Seattle and Portland, which verify a passenger's identity via photo ID and face scans and allows passengers to drop off their bags without waiting in line at the check-in counter.
- O'Hare International Airport in Chicago, IL plans to implement quicker biometric scanning.

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- The Transportation Security Administration (TSA) is further developing eGates in the US.

“Passengers are already using biometrics for different stages of their journey, from check-in to boarding... governments need to start issuing digital passports and enable their secure recognition across borders. When that becomes common practice, travelers, governments, and airlines will all see the benefits of digital identity with an experience that is even more convenient, efficient, and secure.”

*—Nick Careen,
International Air
Transport
Association’s Senior
VP of Operations,
Safety and Security*

Europe In The Lead for Biometrics and Digital ID Adoption

While the American TSA is still testing advancements in eGates, Europe is full-steam-ahead at using eGates in international airports and major entry points. The gradual rollout of advanced biometrics identity verification — requiring fingerprints and face scans — has replaced passport stamping. The updated process is expected to span fully across Europe by August 2026.

Notably, Greece will take an extra step forward in digital security measures by August. The country is rolling out digital ID cards enhanced with RFID-enabled chips.

Increased Biometrics, Digital ID Adoption Raises Privacy Concerns

Despite major brands and several governments pushing for advanced technology at identity checkpoints in travel hubs, many organizations have expressed concerns regarding passenger consent, privacy, and security. Privacy International, along with several other civil liberties and digital rights groups, has long tracked the evolution of biometric travel documents and has continued to demand safer, more transparent standards for passengers. Demands have included:

- The release of clear and binding privacy requirements that will

reduce the risks of illegal collection, use, retention, and transfers of information.

- Prevention of the development of biometric databases.
- Thorough evaluation of pathways with less potential for privacy invasion or other abuse by surveillance agencies.

To address this feedback, some companies have promised to utilize advanced encryption and decentralized systems to reduce the risk of data breaches, biases, and deepfakes. Additionally, these companies are committed to mitigating passenger discrimination and profiling by ensuring human oversight to resolve disputed checks.

Current Research

Amicus International Consulting (AIC) — a firm providing services and advice for issues related to new identities, second passports / citizenships, and anonymous travel — has studied the challenges different regions of the world face regarding biometric misidentification, including issues across airports in North America, Europe, the Middle East, Asia, Africa, and the Caribbean. A recent press release highlights vulnerabilities and growing safeguards in these travel hubs, including false positives / false negatives, algorithmic bias, data integrity failures, and legal challenges from misidentification.

AIC reports that in North America, airports are speedily implementing biometrics, but there

are continuing concerns surrounding technical accountability.

Meanwhile, Europe's biometrics safeguards are strong. However, there are concerns that their developing Entry/Exit system will generate an excess of false rejections.

In Asia-Pacific, standards and transparency for biometrics usage are too varied.

The Middle East has notably experienced difficulties with facial recognition of expatriates.

Africa and the Caribbean face infrastructure problems that limit accuracy and effectiveness.

While these concerns are subject to continued monitoring, there are developments within government and airport divisions to implement

further transparency and protections, including disseminating system errors and metrics, providing tools for passengers to dispute and resolve errors promptly, and rigorous algorithm training on diverse demographic datasets.

Sources:

[International Air Transport Association \(IATA\)](#), [Biometric Update, Travel and Tour World \(1, 2\)](#), [Cyberly, Newstrail, Privacy International, Identity.org](#)

In Summary:

- Passengers are reporting higher satisfaction with biometrics and digital identity usage in airport processing, but North Americans are more resistant to these technologies.
- Regardless, certain US airlines and airports are in the early stages of testing enhanced digital ID and biometrics programs.
- Europe's gradual rollout of advanced biometrics identity verification is industry-leading.
- Many organizations have expressed concerns regarding passenger consent, privacy, and security, leading certain companies to utilize advanced encryption and decentralized systems to reduce the risk of data misuse, passenger discrimination, and profiling.