Lufthansa and Siemens Business Services test biometric check-in

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Some 400 Lufthansa employees at Frankfurt Airport (Germany) have begun testing fingerprint-based check-in and boarding procedures. In its efforts to make its airport handling processes faster, more secure and more efficient, the German airline has decided to test this innovative approach in practice. The solution was developed and implemented by the IT service partner Siemens Business Services, with the support of the Siemens software subsidiary PSE.

In a second stage to be launched in 2006, the "Trusted Traveller" project will be transferred to real-life operation at the airport and also offered at a second, pilot airport, initially for frequent flyers on a voluntary basis.

This is how it works. When checking in at the terminal, Lufthansa passengers have their fingers scanned and stored in a database. Together with the check-in information, the fingerprint is printed in encrypted form as a barcode on the boarding pass. During boarding, the code on the pass is then checked against the actual fingerprint. If there is a match, the passenger is free to board the plane. At present, biometric procedures in air traffic control are voluntary, but they could in future be made mandatory by EU directive.

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