

# Before Your Flight: A Fingerprint Scan at the Check-in Desk

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Lufthansa has teamed up with Siemens to successfully test a biometric process for check-in and boarding at Frankfurt Airport. The tests proved the feasibility of identifying airline passengers from their fingerprints. The testing was conducted with 400 Lufthansa employees and examined technical functions, efficiency and acceptance. Processing times and security benefits were also analyzed. The technology passed the tests with flying colors, and the system is now ready to be launched on the market.

After a passenger's finger is rolled over an optical reader unit, the system from Siemens Business Services converts the fingerprints' distinguishing characteristics into a two-dimensional code made up of dots, which the reader unit prints on the boarding pass. This makes the magnetic strip cards used today obsolete and boosts security. When it comes time to board, the fingerprints are again scanned by a reader unit and compared with the barcode. To ease any concerns about protecting personal information, the data is erased after the passenger checks in. What's more, the technology doesn't save a complete fingerprint but only certain characteristics of the print.

This also serves to foil hackers who try to gain access to the system, because a complete fingerprint can't be reconstructed from the data. And Siemens is also developing effective methods for dealing with fake fingers — artificial, wearable copies of other people's fingers that can be worn by someone trying to avoid fingerprint identification. Fingerprints will be stored in the next generation of passports issued by European

Union countries, and biometric solutions are expected to play an important role in improving travel security in the future.

Source: Siemens

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