

Saying goodbye at airports the green way

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Groundbreaking work is under way to establish just how big a carbon footprint is created by travel to and from airports.

The study is the first of its kind in the world to look at this issue. It also aims to pinpoint innovative measures that will cut these emissions, such as:

- Setting up audio/video facilities at airports that can link with anyone's home, reducing the need to travel to airports to see off friends and family.
- Situating luggage-drop facilities in city centres and train stations, making it easier to travel to airports by public transport.
- Establishing web/mobile-based information-sharing services that promote car-sharing among [airport](#) users, employees etc.

The study is being carried out by a team from the Universities of Loughborough, Cranfield and Leeds, with funding from the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC).

"Aviation is a significant source of [carbon emissions](#), but it's not just the planes that are a problem," says project leader Dr Tim Ryley of Loughborough University. "Travelling to and from airports also has a big impact, but no-one has yet quantified it or identified how to reduce it. This study will address that gap in our understanding."

The study will focus on two UK airports - one international and one regional - and generate recommendations that the aviation industry, airport authorities and policy-makers can implement to reduce aviation's overall [carbon footprint](#).

The study will look at every kind of journey to and from airports. It will not only take into account people catching a flight but also those seeing off or meeting friends and relatives, as well as airline and airport employees.

It will also assess the impact of different types of delivery (food, fuel etc), freight movement and other logistics associated with airport terminals and surrounding facilities.

Importantly, as well as devising and evaluating innovative ways of reducing the carbon footprint of airport journeys (using tried and tested computer modelling techniques) and quantifying their carbon reduction potential, the study will conduct market research to explore how receptive people would be to any recommended changes.

"There's no point developing and implementing a carbon-reduction measure if it won't work in the real world - perhaps because it involves people paying more than they're prepared to pay," says Dr Ryley. "So developing a realistic understanding of attitudes and motivations with respect to people's environmental behaviour will be key to delivering a practical set of recommendations."

An important feature of the project is its interdisciplinary nature, harnessing social sciences and economics alongside engineering and the physical sciences.

The study is due to deliver its conclusions by the end of 2012.

Provided by Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council

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