

Researchers devise faster method of boarding planes

January 7 2014



A Clarkson University research team led by School of Business Professor R. John Milne and undergraduate student Alexander Kelly '14 has devised a faster method for airline passengers to board planes.

Clarkson University researchers have developed a strategy to ease one of the headaches of airline travel: boarding the flight.

School of Business Professor R. John Milne and undergraduate student Alexander Kelly '14 have devised a method that assigns airline passengers to a specific seat based on the number of bags they carry, causing luggage to be evenly distributed through the plane. Each row of seats would tend to have a passenger with two bags, a passenger with one bag and a passenger with no bags.

"The new method would save at least several seconds in boarding time and prevent any one area of the plane from becoming overloaded with bags," Milne, the Neil '64 and Karen Bonke Assistant Professor in Engineering Management, said. "Airlines could provide a smoother boarding experience for passengers by utilizing the research."

"You add that up over thousands of flights a day over the course of a year; it can really make a difference," Milne explained. "For instance, a large airline like Delta may be able to save about ten million dollars a year."

The Los Angeles Times featured a story on Clarkson's research in its January 5 edition; NBC's "Today Show" also mentioned it on January 6.

Kelly, a computer science and mechanical engineering dual major from East Greenbush, N.Y., tested the method by running thousands of simulated airplane boardings through a computer model. The experience helped him hone in on a career path.

"It was a great connection to see how academic research can solve a real-world problem," Kelly said. "This research helped me find what kind of work I enjoy doing and directed me towards a full time position I accepted with General Electric Intelligent Platforms this year."

More information: Read the complete study:
www.sciencedirect.com/science/...ii/S0969699713001166

Provided by Clarkson University

Citation: Researchers devise faster method of boarding planes (2014, January 7) retrieved 19 September 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2014-01-faster-method-boarding-planes.html>

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