

Seamless Travel - Why shouldn't the journey be as pleasurable as the destination?

By  Bronwyn Williams

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Leisure travel is supposed to be a pleasurable experience. Unfortunately, even the best holiday tends to involve large quantities of administration and frustration before you get there; research and verification of where you will be staying and who you will be paying, visa paperwork, seemingly endless queues at airports and border posts, and much else besides.



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In short, the travel part of the travel industry could be improved. Tourists and business travellers alike would like the process of getting to wherever they are going to be as pleasurable as their end destination. After all, there is no logical reason why travel should not be a seamless experience.

Fortunately for us weary travellers, businesses are starting to address these pain points. In the not too distant future, we should be able to travel paper, queue and hassle-free.

Priority boarding gets even better

As if we need more reasons to covet business class passengers, Delta Air Lines now offers a facial recognition bag drop-off for its priority customers at Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport. At the specially equipped kiosks, cameras scan travellers faces to confirm their identity, thereby dramatically speeding up the check-in process.

Similarly, KLM airlines are testing biometric boarding at Schiphol Airport. This facial recognition technology allows priority passengers to board planes through a special door without having to fumble for their boarding pass or passport.

Grab your virtual passport and go

Frequent flier? Listen up. Global consulting firm, Accenture, in conjunction with the World Economic Forum has developed

the Known Traveller Digital Identity System. The system essentially provides frequent travellers with a blockchain-based virtual passport and identity. The system collects, verifies and securely stores passengers' identifying information. It also facilitates fast and secure sharing of that data between travellers and customs agents. This means both better security and shorter queues.

Dubai's space-age aquarium brings airports into the 21st century

The last thing you feel like doing after a long haul flight is standing in a lengthy customs queue. Now though, travellers to the Middle East actually have something to look forward to at arrivals. In July 2018, Dubai airport opened a first-of-its-kind virtual security tunnel to welcome travellers into the United Arab Emirates.

In true Emirate style, the security tunnel is designed as a virtual aquarium, filled with robotic fish (yes, swimming fish) equipped with facial recognition technology. As you walk through the tunnel, the tiny aquatic robot customs officials will scan your face to verify your identity and access into the UAE. It promises to make the customs process more entertaining and more efficient.

Skip the check-in process and get to your post-flight shower faster

Of course, even after you leave the airport, you still have another tiresome queue to look forward to at your hotel reception desk. No longer. Now, thanks to the London, based product consultancy firm Zerado, you can skip the check-in process and go straight to your room. Zerado has developed a prototype room access control system that uses a private blockchain to store information about hotel customers' identity, authorisation, and payment status. This technology facilitates an e-hotel check-in process, whereby you can book and pay for a room online and then use the credit or debit card you used for payment as your room key too. Simple and convenient.

The future of travel looks seamless indeed.

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