

# SELF-SERVICE IS THE TREND IN THE AIR TRAVEL SECTOR



According to SITA, a specialist provider of IT solutions to airlines and airports, self-service is fast becoming the norm at many airports on the globe. The company conducted a survey according to which 57.6 per cent of surveyed passengers (2,143 respondents) booked their flight online and 36 per cent checked in on the web or on a self-service kiosk.

These passengers are also willing to use the technology in future as well. The surveyed people stated that what is the most important when making their travel arrangement and reservation is the price (70.5 per cent), flight schedule (63.1 per cent) and the possibility to make their own arrangement on the web (42.5 per cent). Reasons for the use of Internet were obvious, 72 per cent of the respondents quoted ease of use, 60 per cent save of time and 56 per cent liked the possibility to easily compare various options. Thanks to the Internet the air travel business becomes even more competitive than it used to be.

Air travelers enjoy the use of the IT technologies and would welcome extension of the self-service possibilities. It is expected that in future the number of people who frequently use the IT technologies for booking etc. will increase significantly.

In general, majority of air travelers enjoy the use of modern technologies, for example, 93 per cent of the surveyed was carrying a mobile device. The survey also showed that ancillary services provided on an airline's web page are a useful marketing tool. Growing number of customers e.g. book hotel rooms or rent cars on these web pages. Number of those bookings is expected to double in the coming years. Almost half of the respondents would accept automated border control and security processing.

The survey has also shown that there are important differences in opinions of passengers according to their country of origin. For example, almost all people at Atlanta and Charles de Gaulle airport knew of the availability of self-service check-in. On the other hand the awareness of this possibility among people at airports in other countries was much lower with awareness in Johannesburg reaching 44.7 per cent; Domodedovo 33.6 per cent and only 24.7 per cent in Mumbai.

People in the global air travel sector are well aware of the importance of the IT technology and this is why they plan to spend huge sums on technologies this year. Nevertheless, the credit crunch will probably be reflected in their spending plans too.

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