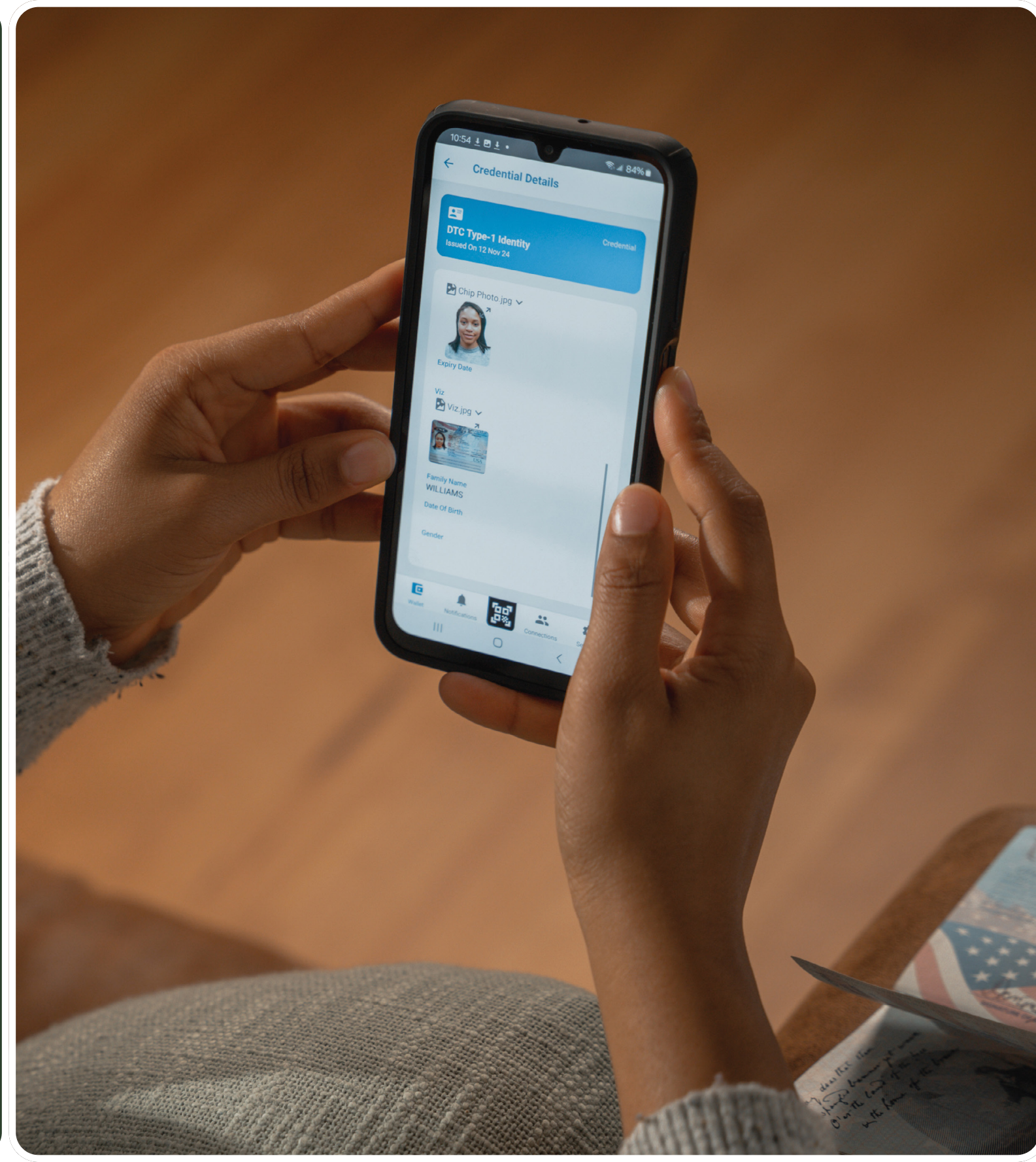


SITA

THE IDENTITY SHIFT THAT'S REDEFINING GLOBAL TRAVEL



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Foreword by
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Digital Identity Customer Journey Lead,

SITA

Foreword: the vision

There was a time, prior to 1915, when passports did not include a photo of the bearer. Instead, there was a written description. Back then, passports had to evolve to improve security, mitigate espionage, and prevent fraudulent use.

Right now, identity verification is undergoing another profound evolution. Once again, security and assurance are prime motivators, but so too is a desire for convenience, efficiency and global alignment.

As we know from the air travel industry, digital identities are the answer.

About eight billion passengers are expected to take to the skies by 2040. At the same time, airports are facing a projected 1.5 billion shortfall in capacity by 2040, and the aviation industry is bracing for a workforce gap of 1.6 million people by 2030.

Using digital identities, biometric authentication, automation and mobile solutions across multiple travel touchpoints, governments, airports, and airlines are successfully bridging this capacity deficit without compromising the safety of passengers and countries. In the process, they create a smoother travel experience, faster processing time, and greater efficiency.

By integrating digital identities across multiple systems, from airlines and airports to border control, hotel, car hire, and ground transport handling, new opportunities are being unlocked to add value to the traveler and enhance business models.

First movers like the Caribbean island nation of Aruba are testament to the positive ripple effects of digital identity adoption on frictionless travel, tourism, and national economies.

But there's a hitch. The number of digital identity technologies on the market today is increasingly fragmented. This is holding back true global integration as different platforms, systems, and technologies battle to work effectively together.

Turning this disconnection into a frictionless journey underpins SITA's approach to digital identities. Having seen firsthand the impact of decentralized digital identities on trust, integrity, operational efficiencies, and global cooperation, we know the next leap requires compatible systems capable of working in harmony. This sort of practical thinking about vital cost-savers like interoperability is exactly what sets us apart as a strategic technology and your partner of choice.



Understanding the big shifts: sentiment and safety

By 2040, international air travel alone is projected to exceed 8 billion travelers a year. Relying on in-person, paper-based systems to process passengers and clear them at immigration is cumbersome, inefficient and prone to mistakes. Rising numbers of border crossings – by air, land and sea – are putting national borders under increasing pressure. Resulting in longer queues, and mounting traveler frustration. This is not good for business or for borders.

As traveler numbers continue to swell, frictionless travel is no longer a nice-to-have. It's a real-world imperative and a game changer for governments, border officials, and travel and tourism businesses. But frictionless travel doesn't just happen in a vacuum. It needs digital identity technology to thrive.

What's changing?

Underpinned by biometric authentication systems and enhanced by the adoption of new mobile identity wallets, digital identities don't just replace old verification techniques, they tease out touchpoints across a country's entire travel ecosystem that can fundamentally shift the entire human travel experience.

This makes digital identities a business imperative for airlines, airports and the travel sector. And the essential tool for border security officials around the world.

The successful use of digital identities in the aviation sector demonstrates that user demand is there. Impact certainly is. Already **43%** of global airports are using biometric boarding systems. Over **28%** of airlines are investing in digital identity solutions that reduce passenger waiting times by over **60%** and make boarding **30%** faster.

Travelers are hungry for digital identity solutions. Most - **85%** - believe digital travel credentials will improve their journeys. Among travelers aged 18-44, that number jumps to **90%**.

They aren't alone. Governments and immigration officials are also reaping the rewards that come with rolling out robust and reliable identity verification technology. Digital identities and biometric processes give governments and immigration officials valuable time to cross-check travelers, red-flag potential threats, and stop them before they get to the border. For low-threat travelers, it means smooth sailing through borders. Less red tape. And more time for fun, not frustration.

85%
BELIEVE DIGITAL
TRAVEL CREDENTIALS
WILL IMPROVE
THEIR JOURNEYS

Why now?

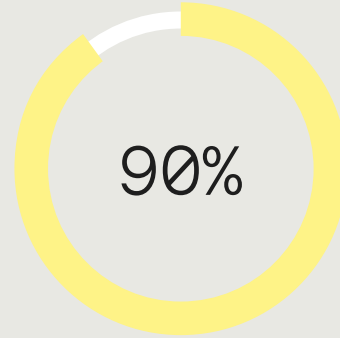
Traveler demand is driving the rapid adoption of digital identities, as evidenced by our latest [Passenger IT Insights report](#). This demand is influencing governments, airlines, and airports to accelerate their digital identity strategies.

Governments and Border Control:

For any government or border control agency not in step with this shift, consider these statistics: by 2026, more than half of the world's airports will roll out biometrics for check-in and bag drop. Globally, only 18% of countries are not actively developing digital identity systems, with leaders including the Americas, the European Union, Aruba, Australia, Singapore, the United Arab Emirates, India, and the United Kingdom. For these regions, digital identities are a strategic imperative.

Airlines and Airports:

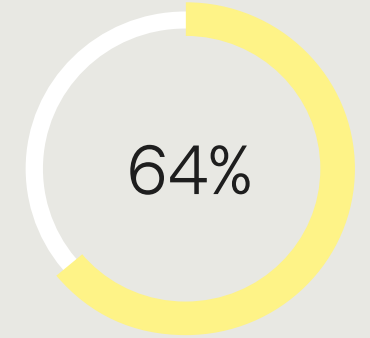
Airports and airlines are responding to traveler expectations by investing in biometric and digital identity solutions that reduce waiting times and streamline the journey. The majority of passengers are already comfortable using technology for bookings, storing digital travel credentials, and sharing immigration information when it speeds up airport processes.



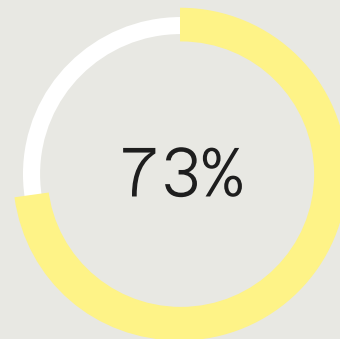
90%
of passengers are already using
technology to make travel bookings

3 OUT OF 4

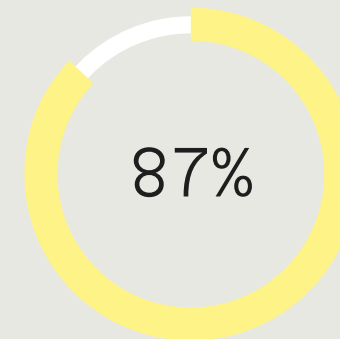
travelers are already comfortable
storing their passports on their mobile
phone in the form of a digital travel
credential (DTC)



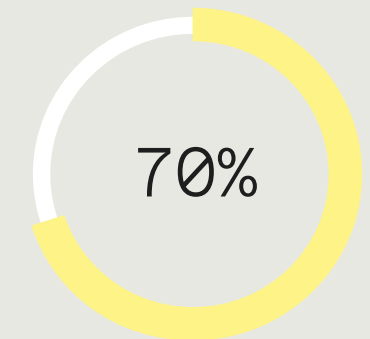
64%
want systems in place that cut waiting
times, slash queues and do away
with inconvenient document checks



73%
prefer to use biometrics instead of
paper passports and boarding passes



87%
or more are comfortable sharing their
immigration information – but it must
speed things up at the airport.



70%
of airlines are looking to adopt
biometric digital identity management
systems over the same period.

Are you asking yourself these questions?

How do we build trust in digital systems?

Trust is the cornerstone of digital identity adoption. Travelers, governments, and industry partners must feel confident that data is secure, privacy is respected, and control remains with the user.

SITA's decentralised approach ensures that personal data is only used with consent and can be deleted at any time. This user-first model builds trust across every touchpoint and aligns with global privacy standards.

How do we scale the capacity of physical infrastructure?

Rather than expanding physical infrastructure, the focus should be on making existing systems smarter. SITA's Smart Path and border control solutions show how biometric and digital identity technologies can be layered onto current airport and border systems to streamline operations, reduce bottlenecks, and improve security.

SITA also collaborates with third-party partners through Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) to drive industry-wide interoperability and innovation.

How do we create connected travel ecosystems?

Travelers increasingly use multiple transport modes – air, rail, car hire, cruise. Digital identities enable seamless transitions across these services.

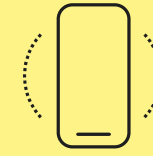
Aruba's success story, powered by SITA and Indicio, demonstrates how integrated systems can reduce border processing to just 8 seconds and boost tourism spend by over 12%. This kind of ecosystem thinking unlocks value across the entire journey.

How do we ensure global interoperability?

Early adoption of ICAO and IATA standards positions nations and industry leaders at the forefront of digital travel. Working with partners who shape these standards ensures readiness for the next leap – interoperable, frictionless, passport-free travel.

DIGITAL IDENTITY POWERS THE TRAVEL JOURNEY

1 Before the Airport



Booking
& travel
authorization



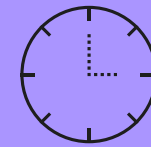
Check-in &
passenger
enrolment

2 Through the Airport



Bag
drop

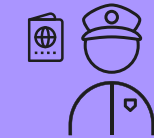
3 Destination Airport



Aircraft
boarding



Lounge
access &
retail



Security
and border
control



Border
control



Car rental
pick up



Hotel
check-in



In country
events

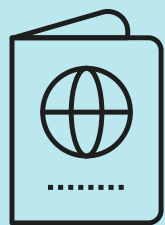


A connected
trip

Everything flows from the use of digital identities. Here's how:

Know who's coming to stay

Digital identities let authorities identify travelers before arrival, enabling quick checks. Airlines gain earlier, more accurate data for better planning, smoother operations, and enhanced service.



Walk in, walk through, walk out

Biometric technology and self-service machines (check-in kiosks, bag drop, eGates) allow authorities to verify travelers at every stage, while passengers enjoy a seamless, queue-free experience.



That VIP feeling

Digital identity solutions streamline baggage, security, and lounge access, making every step of the journey faster and more personalised for travelers.



Stamp out inefficiencies

Digital identities speed up passenger processing. ABC Gates and biometrics cut processing times by up to 78%, enabling tap-and-go for ETAs and DTCs – making borders faster and safer.



Keep them coming back for more

A frictionless travel experience encourages repeat visits and supports tourism growth, with digital identities removing pain points from hotel check-in to event access.



Harnessing digital identity solutions is already transforming the traveler experience

Enhancing security, combatting fraud, and streamlining operations. But the sector is developing at speed, and new trends are emerging. Here are just three:

Flexibility to scale at will:

Border officials need the flexibility to rapidly scale up, and down, depending on passenger flows. This means they need passenger processing systems that can be increased to deal efficiently with rising numbers, without compromising security. Seasonal travel routes are becoming a popular offering. Mega sporting events attract millions of travelers. And governments need tighter control over borders during times of health crises or natural disasters. They need systems designed with agility in mind.

Border security is only as strong as its data.

DTCs eliminate human error and, when integrated with ABC Gates, iAPI, and risk systems, enable earlier threat detection and safer borders.

Harnessing the human-smartphone love story:

Online is no longer enough. Today's traveler wants to manage every step of their journey using their smartphone. This puts control in the user's hand, cuts out data input errors, and enables an interconnected end-to-end journey from pre-clearance at home to checks through the airport, and passing through the border at the destination country.

Talking the same language:

As digital identities take off, so too with the companies and solutions available to service this need. Not all of these systems work well with each other. Making for an increasingly fragmented software ecosystem. In the future, the ability of systems to work with one another will be key to ensuring that standards are adhered to, and costs are being kept in check. When shopping around for a digital identity solution, be sure to ask if interoperability is a priority for your supplier.

WHAT'S COMING NEXT?

GOVERNMENTS

Problem

Aruba wanted to stand out in the Caribbean travel market, but faced a few hurdles. Long queues at the border, rising security concerns, and a jumble of identity systems were making things harder for both travelers and border teams. The island needed a way to speed things up without adding more staff or hardware.

Solution

Aruba teamed up with SITA and Indicio to launch the Aruba Happy One Pass - a digital travel credential app built on ICAO and IATA standards. Travelers could verify their identity using facial biometrics before they even landed. The system was decentralized, secure, and worked with existing infrastructure.

Impact

- Border crossing time dropped to just 8 seconds
- Travelers went from plane to beach in under 30 minutes
- Spending on restaurants jumped by 11.2%
- Hotel revenue rose by 12.8%
- Aruba became the first country to connect ICAO DTC and IATA OneID - without needing new hardware

Start small. Think big. Get started

Start small. Think big. Get started

A successful digital identity transformation may start with a few small, steady, and strategic steps and then mushroom into a grand vision where verified digital identities are quickly, safely, and accurately confirmed using biometric data, and can also be integrated with other technologies.

Our collaborative approach, and strong focus on creating solutions that enable different systems to work together, makes us the perfect fit for any government looking to harness modern travel solutions and digital identities to streamline travel and tourism, while beefing up national security and border oversight.

We work alongside you to identify your unique challenges and priorities, starting with small, practical steps. Our flexible approach lets you test and scale digital identity solutions at your own pace, adapting as your needs and passenger volumes grow.





SITA: Your partner from start to finish

SITA Borders aims to help governments strike the right balance between keeping people safe, stopping threats and still making travel smooth and welcoming.

Its technology supports the entire passenger journey, end-to-end, from pre-travel authorization to arrival and clearance – making it easier for border teams and better for travelers.

SITA is trusted by over 75 governments, including every G20 nation, to keep their borders safe, and people and goods flowing. Its systems enable more than 2.2 billion journeys every year and connects with 700+ airlines, meaning passengers can move through borders more easily, and agencies get the data they need to make smart decisions.

SITA started providing border solutions with the 2000 Sydney Olympics, helping manage travel for thousands of athletes and fans. And more recently it has supported FIFA World Cup in Qatar, where its systems helped link travel, accommodation, and stadium access—all in one.

Whether it's in the air, on land, or sea, SITA is helping governments to keep borders secure, travel flowing effectively, and people moving safely.

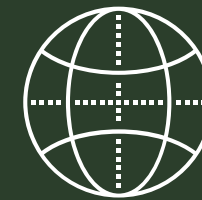
For more information, [click here](#) or email us at borders.enquiry@sita.aero

WHY 75+ NATIONS RELY ON SITA TO IMPROVE THEIR BORDERS



Border efficiency

78% faster processing with SITA ABC Gates
2.2 billion journeys processed annually



Global adoption

Trusted by **75+** governments
7,000+ biometric touchpoints



Security and risk management

230M+ risk assessments/year
170+ countries issue ePassports



Passenger experience

90% prefer self-service immigration
100M passengers cleared to board via SITA



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