Case Study
bmi

2D bar code readers enable bmi to revolutionise airport check-in and boarding

The Challenge

Airlines have never operated in a more competitive market place. Customer satisfaction, aimed at ensuring repeat business, is high on everyone's agenda. Attacking the problem of interminable queues is therefore a high priority. Home printing of boarding passes is now well established and has done much to ease the problem of queues at check-in. But bmi wanted to push the boundaries even further to ensure that they, and their customers, could make the best possible use of advanced ticketing technologies in order to keep airport delays to a minimum.

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The Solution

Nearly every regular airline passenger now has a mobile phone, PDA or both. Regular business passengers are normally experienced users of these devices.
The idea, which was successfully trialed in the spring and summer of 2008, was to make use of the electronic devices to make the whole check-in process paperless, or at least as paperless as possible. The solution was found in Real Time Engineering's FirstPass mobile boarding pass software. This, coupled with Access' unique bar code reader, enables 2D electronic boarding passes to be read quickly and easily from the screen of a mobile phone or PDA. The QR, DataMatrix or Aztec bar codes are simply sent by the airline over the phone network to customers' mobile phones

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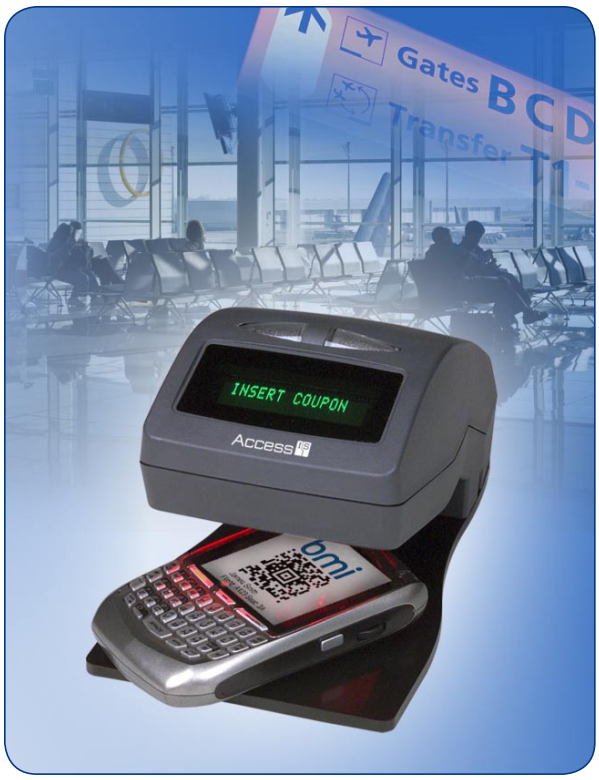
Access IS
Interfacing Solutions

as a multimedia message (MMS) or WAP push via a link. Real Time Engineering worked with IATA, the global airline standards body, for two years to develop the FirstPass operating standard, which will be used by all airlines. The Access imager is unique in its ability to read bar codes face-up. This makes it faster and easier to capture the bar code as the agent can easily place the bar code in the target zone and ensure the backlight has not turned itself off. It also eliminates a common problem with inadvertent dialing when reading face down on a flatbed imager.

Access also provided a complementary receipt printer, which the trial has shown can double the speed of boarding. Printed receipts may be needed when boarding an aircraft that is re-fuelling. The printer can be configured to produce two receipts, one for the passenger for the final stage of the boarding process and one for the airline for passenger reconciliation, where required by the airline.

The Results

David Menezes, bmi's senior product and development manager said, "FirstPass was attractive as a simple, effective solution that our passengers would find easy to use. The trial has exceeded our expectations and has been extremely popular with passengers. We believe that the technology will go from strength-to-strength over the next few years. The bar code readers have proven



themselves to be very robust and reliable in operation, and the accompanying receipt printers are invaluable in saving us further time and expense in boarding passengers."

The Future

FirstPass technology is creating interest from more airlines and other public transport organizations as all strive to reduce their operating costs while staying focused on customer service. It is also being considered by companies that run concerts and sports events.

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