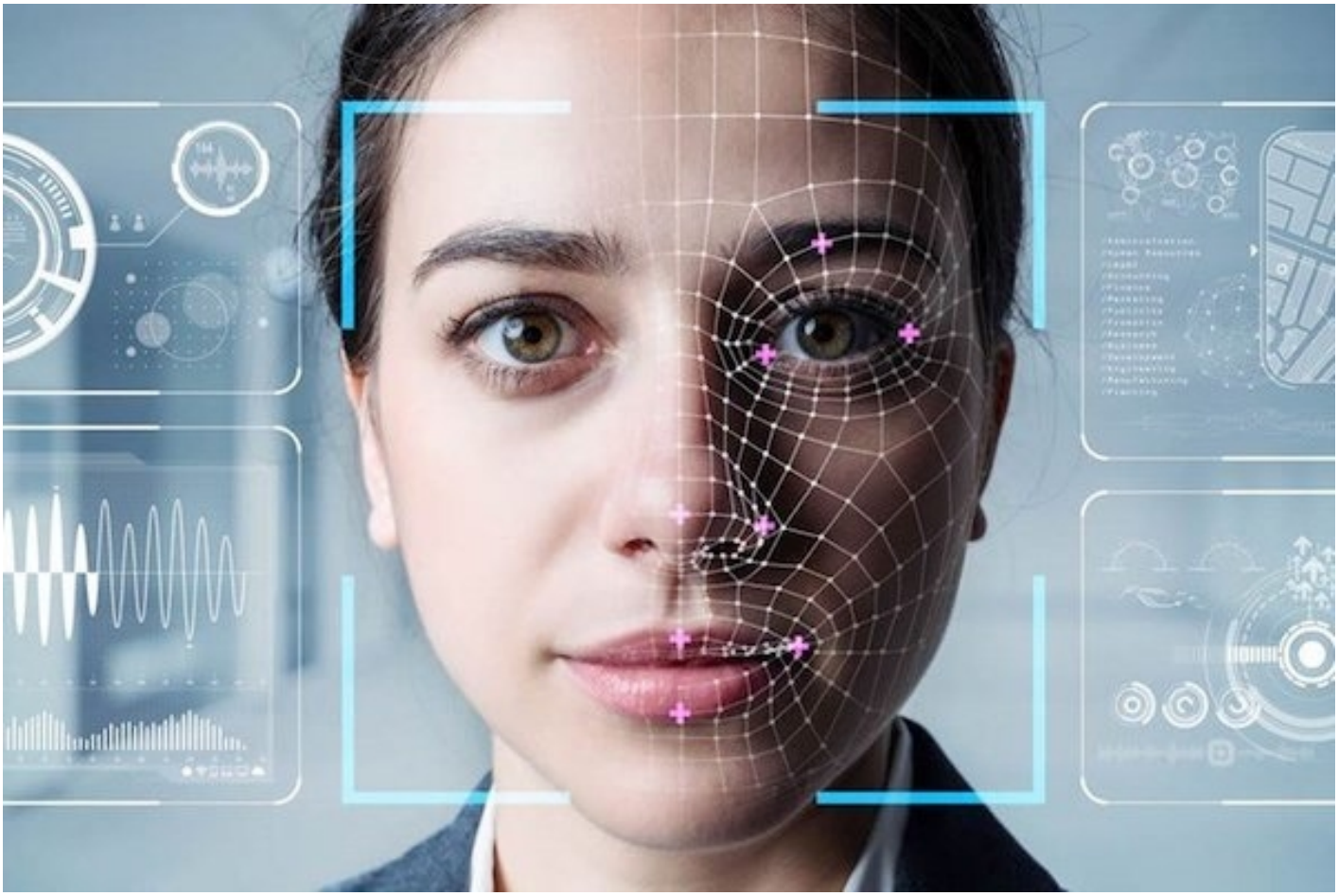
SITA BIOMETRIC SOLUTION PROVIDES FAST TRACK FOR UNITED AIRLINES DOMESTIC TRAVELERS AT SFO

News / Airlines, Airports / Routes



San Francisco International Airport (SFO) and United Airlines have become the first in the United States to trial a low-touch, biometric-enabled airport experience from check-in to boarding for domestic travelers on select flights. Using SITA Smart Path, passengers participating in the trial can link their driver's license to their facial biometric at check-in. They can then move through the airport, from check-in to bag drop, security and boarding by simply scanning their face at each touchpoint.

In 2020, over half of all international flights at SFO were boarded using biometrics. Today the airport and United extend that same experience to domestic passengers on select flights at SFO across multiple steps in the journey.

United Airlines vice president of airport operations at San Francisco International Airport, Lori Augustine, said: "United has been a leader in providing a touchless experience for our customers – from our longtime and ongoing partnership with CLEAR, to being the first airline to implement touchless kiosks in our check-in lobbies. We are looking forward to participating in this trial with SITA and exploring new technology that will help inform our biometric offerings in the future, as well as offer our domestic customers a frictionless

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experience as they travel through SFO.”

In response to COVID-19, SFO, United and SITA are working together to provide safer, innovative self-service solutions that reduce passenger surface contact and agent interactions, improve the customer experience, and reduce processing times.

San Francisco International Airport Director, Ivar C. Satero, said: “We firmly believe that touchless technologies will be an important part of the post-pandemic air travel experience, and we are proud that United Airlines has selected SFO as a location to test this solution from SITA. This collaboration shows our collective commitment to restore air travel to an even higher standard of safety and efficiency for our guests. We thank United and SITA for their leadership and vision in this effort.”

With Smart Path, your face is your boarding pass. United passengers simply link their driver’s license and flight details to their facial biometric. Passengers then step up to a biometrically enabled camera to drop their bags, pass through the security checkpoint, or board the aircraft without having to hand over possession of their photo ID or boarding pass. This reduces physical contact and provides a more efficient process for travelers and staff alike.

Diana Einterz, SITA President Americas, said: “The ability to use existing airport infrastructure is key to quickly respond to the new health measures required by the COVID-19 pandemic and cost effective for airlines at a time when passenger volumes will take time to fully recover. Extending the benefits of SITA Smart Path is one way we are supporting the air transport community as we face these new challenges.”

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