

**Air travel post COVID-19**

# Aviation moving toward singularity



## While focusing on redesigning the passenger journey, airports also need to build a digital ecosystem for end-to-end airport management

The COVID-19 crisis is disrupting the aviation industry in a big way, leading to a significant decline in passenger numbers and a shift in passengers' perception about air travel safety. How we help allay these fears and address the evolved needs of passengers post-pandemic will define the new normal for the aviation business.

Emerging technologies will power business transformation with new operation processes and new service practices at the airport to drive self-sustainable digital transaction that will provide greater autonomy to the users, the delivery staff at the airport, and the ensuing partner ecosystem.

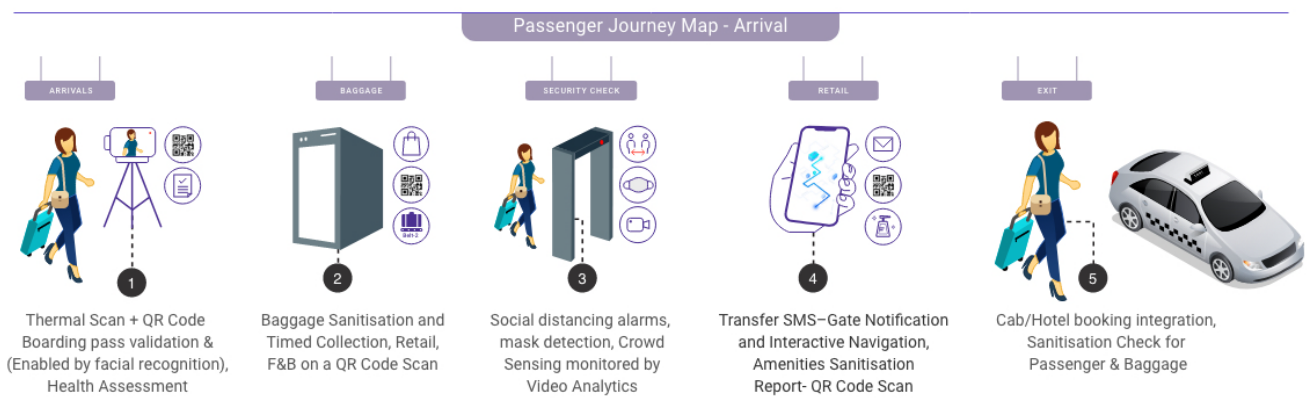
### Airline passenger experience post COVID-19

Let me take you on a journey with Rita, whose work requires her to travel extensively. Today is her first post-pandemic flight.

This time, at the airport, Rita's anxiety and stress levels are peaking, but to her surprise, airport infrastructure and ambiance look different. There are wider physical spaces, multiple fever scanners, on-screen and audible alerts to identify individuals in a large crowd situation, aiding rapid detection and maintaining pedestrian flow. Airport staff is stationed at designated locations, safely behind transparent counter shields, and dispensers for PPE safety kits, sanitizers, and antimicrobial packaging are placed at multiple locations within easy reach of the passengers.

The airport floor is covered with self-cleaning carpet and all information, schedules etc., are displayed on huge digital screens.

Rita is delighted to find that these digital screens can be mimicked on her personal device through a simple QR scan. An additional access to her wallet on the phone to link the boarding pass eliminates the need to touch any commonly used screen, which could be a breeding ground of contamination. These screens are designed to make use of her phone's real estate and does not require her to download the airport mobile app, though there is a link to do that if she wishes to.



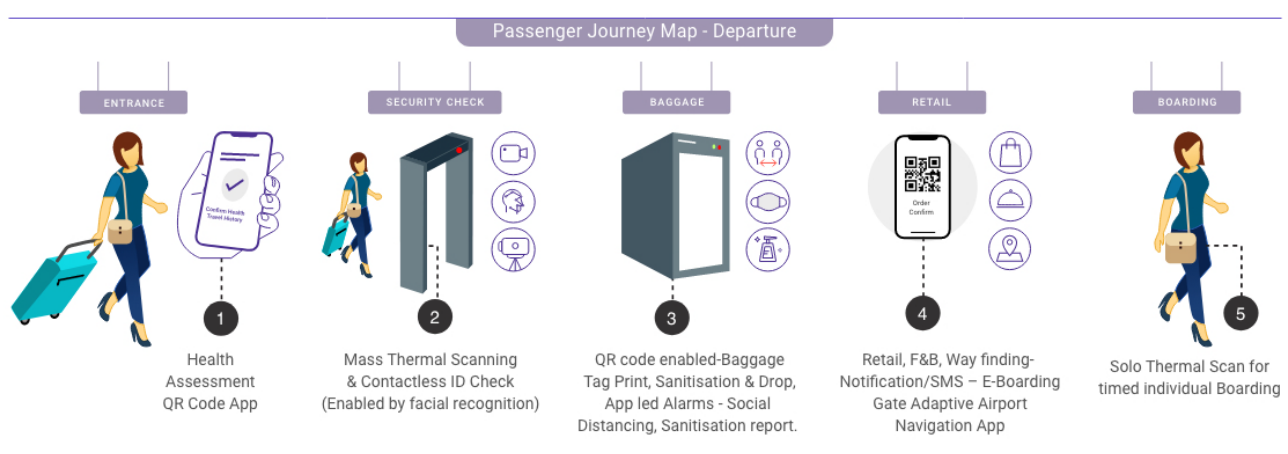
Once inside the airport, Rita avails the newly installed self-service bag drop counter and makes her way through the non-intrusive and frictionless airport security process supported by camera vision-enabled body scanner. Using the new interactive indoor navigation map, Rita moves to the retail area and is relieved to note that passengers are evenly spread out maintaining the norms of social distancing, guided by floor markings. The airport staff is seen keeping an eye on passengers through camera vision technology to mark and identify those not wearing masks and/ or not following social distancing norms.

Rita finds that the mobile app driven by the conversational AI bot Ansh, can efficiently guide her to offers, notifications, information, availability of sanitized seating places, retail, F&B and other amenities around her. Using the GPS coordinates, she also gets an option to view the sanitization reports of the seating and other common facilities like the washroom, prayer room, and water dispenser in her vicinity besides having extensive videos about the new safety measures, practices, emergency and exit plans at the airport.

As Rita is settling down with a steaming mug of coffee, she notices that Ansh has quietly offered her a plethora of engagement channels, from music and video streaming apps, to e-library filled with e-papers, e-books, magazines, audio books, documentaries, and exclusive online games. She is amazed to see that the engagement channels are premium and she is not required to pay for the content while she is at the airport.

Rita gets notified on her mobile app about boarding in 'just-in-time' method, which is calculated exclusively based on her distance (enabled by GPS location) from the boarding gate, resulting in free flowing, and social distance maintaining queue for safe, secure and easy boarding.

Rita is delighted with her experience at the airport - the uncrowded, clean and sanitized areas, and the attention to detail displayed by the airport comforts her as a passenger and enhances her experience with multiple thoughtful gestures embedded as functionalities.



## Reimagining aviation in the new normal

Travel will prevail over post-pandemic stress, making it incumbent on the aviation industry to bring about the changes that create safer infrastructure and practices that take care of the safety and wellbeing of passengers, airport staff, and partner ecosystem. Along with safety, airports also have to look at building a collaborative and efficient operating environment, which will not just facilitate recovery from this crisis but also shape the new normal.

Evolved workforce management practices should be deployed to enforce a culture of safety in the very fabric of travel service industry. Organizations will have to encourage employees to rigorously practice and transparently report the hygiene and sanitization processes.

Technology will help airports establish best practices. Human-centric design thinking that draws insights from cognitive, social psychology, neuroscience and behavioral economics should be applied to build airport's digital applications. These design principles will enable frictionless digital experience for passengers and build positive perception among users along with discouraging stigmas and misinformation.

While airports are now focusing on redesigning the passenger journey touchpoints to build contactless solutions and ensure safety of passengers and employees in compliance with government guidelines; they also need to think beyond, and in collaboration with airlines and other ecosystem partners at the airport, build a digital ecosystem that enhances the complete passenger experience.

Over the past few months, Wipro has worked with Airports and Technology partners to facilitate seamless, touchless journeys for passengers. We have enabled integrated and collaborative management systems powered by digital. These digital airport solutions aim to build a connected ecosystem for end-to-end airport systems management from IT and OT systems integration to flight and airside digital operations management.



**Our customers - three large global airports - have been ranked as best airports in ASQ rating for 2018, 19. Contact us to know how we can help you adapt to the new normal of air travel and achieve high passenger satisfaction.**

## About the author

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