



CWT Traveler

CURRENT NEWS AFFECTING TODAY'S BUSINESS TRAVELER

June 2009

Survey

CWT Traveler wants to know

CWT Traveler would like to give readers the opportunity to weigh in on topics of relevance to travelers. Each month highlights a single survey question, and the following month reveals the results. Readers also have the option to submit potential survey questions to be highlighted in future issues of *CWT Traveler*. June's question is below, along with the link to submit a response.

Which of the following social media tools do you use, for personal and/or professional use? Please select all that apply.

- Facebook (personally)
- Facebook (professionally)
- Twitter (personally)
- Twitter (professionally)
- Blogs (personally)
- Blogs (professionally)
- LinkedIn (personally)
- LinkedIn (professionally)
- I do not use any social media at this time, but plan to in the future.
- I do not use any social media at this time, and have no plans to do so in the future.

Submit your response [here](#).

May survey results

The May survey question and results were as follows:

How do you feel about airport security checkpoints using whole body imaging technology?

- 39% responded "I support it"
- 24% responded "I oppose it"
- 20% responded "I am indifferent"
- 17% responded "I am unfamiliar with the technology"

Green Tip of the Month

At home:

Rather than turning on the air conditioning, consider opening windows to cool the house on summer evenings.

Current Events

Credit card usage in international destinations comes at a price

When making credit card purchases in international destinations, travelers may begin noticing additional fees showing up on their statements. It is not a new practice for banks to charge their customers for using their credit card to make purchases in foreign currencies, but some banks are now increasing those fees.

Another fee that is becoming more common is a fee that is assessed for transactions made in a foreign country, even if the transaction is processed in the currency of the traveler's home country. Travelers may want to research the fees their credit card provider includes on foreign transactions before making purchases abroad.

Sources: The Wall Street Journal, USA TODAY

Recovery Act funds awarded for transportation security projects

In May, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) announced the distribution of USD \$50 million for safety equipment to modernize baggage screening and enhance security in airports nationwide. These funds represent some of the first dollars spent out of a total of USD \$1 billion made available by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) for the Transportation Security Administration (TSA).

The majority of the funds have been dedicated to explosive detection systems provided by [Reveal Imaging Technologies](#). Similar to MRI machines in a doctor's office, these enhanced systems quickly scan bags while analyzing explosive content. The systems currently are in more than 200 airports across the country.

The remaining funds have been allotted for advanced technology X-ray units, from [Rapiscan Systems](#), which further provide enhanced screening for carry-on baggage. Since the units are reprogrammable, the new machines can be adapted to developing threats. Roughly 770 systems are currently in place at airports nationwide.

The innovative technology provides a more efficient way to check baggage, limiting the number of bags to be physically opened; and—most importantly—provides enhanced security.

Earlier this year, USD \$1 billion of ARRA funds were allocated to support TSA aviation security projects: USD \$700 million will be allocated for checked baggage screening efforts and USD \$300 million for checkpoint explosives detection technology.

Sources: dhs.gov, gsnmagazine.com, tsa.gov, revealimaging.com, globalsecurity.org, wacotrib.com

Travel Tips

Traveling to Greece

Editor's note: Global business, and subsequently, global business travel, continues to expand rapidly. In response, CWT Traveler will provide to readers each month insights and tips on traveling from North America to other countries around the world. This month's installment focuses on Greece.

Good to know:

- Greece is seven hours ahead of North America Eastern Standard Time (EST).
- The Greek Orthodox Church forms an integral part of the Greek identity; it is the official religion and 98 percent of Greeks are members.
- The Greek language is written in the Greek alphabet, which is over 2,000 years old.
- Greeks tend to be physically demonstrative.
- There is a Greek tradition of hard bargaining.
- Many Greeks are heavy smokers (approximately 45 percent of adults smoke). Although smoking is banned in many public places, this rule is often ignored.

In business:

- It is advisable to have one side of business cards printed in English and the other in Greek. Present the card with the Greek side up.
- The business day generally starts at 8:00 a.m. and ends at 7:30 p.m., with a lengthy break in the early afternoon.
- Lunch is the main meal of the day, served between noon and 2:00 p.m. Dinner is a small meal, eaten late.
- Always be punctual, even if this is not stressed by Greek counterparts.
- Conservative business clothing is best.
- In first business encounters, a handshake is typical.

Sources: travel.state.gov, "Kiss, Bow, or Shake Hands: The Bestselling Guide to Doing Business in More Than 60 Countries", by Terri Morrison and Wayne A. Conaway. Published by Adams Media of Avon, Massachusetts.

Travelers can remain productive on the road

Business travel means spending hours in airports, planes, and hotel rooms, away from the efficiency of a normal work space. How can business travelers compensate for the loss of productivity, especially if travel plans are disrupted?

Productivity experts recommend:

1. Always book through a travel agency, to ensure assistance in making alternate travel arrangements is available, if necessary.
2. Dress professionally for the flight, at least business casual. If luggage goes astray, this allows the traveler to still attend the business meeting looking presentable.
3. Consider membership to an airport VIP lounge, which offers a quiet environment for work.

4. Stay in touch with assistants during a lengthy trip, to keep on top of issues.
5. Some frequent travelers keep a second suitcase ready at home, packed for the next immediate trip.
6. Schedule flights to make the most of any time zone differences. If headed west, try to leave in the evening; if headed east, leave mid-afternoon.
7. Get enough sleep and keep up an exercise regimen.

The least efficient workspace, according to an American Airlines Customer Research online study, is in flight. More than 96 percent of respondents said they conduct work-related activities at their hotels. Eighty-five percent conduct work-related activities at the airport, but this number drops to 52.6 percent onboard a flight. Reasons include lack of space, distractions and lack of power or Internet access.

Consider working on a personal digital assistant (PDA) while in flight, rather than a laptop, to do low-security tasks, including emails.

Sources: Calgary Herald; internetnews.com

Supplier News

American Airlines rolls out cashless cabins

Beginning June 1, American Airlines will no longer accept cash as payment for onboard amenities including headsets, meals, snacks, and alcoholic beverages. Effective for flights within the continental United States, as well as flights to and from Hawaii, Alaska, and Canada, acceptable payment will include major credit and debit cards only.

This change will not apply to American Eagle and AmericanConnection flights, where cash will continue to be the only acceptable form of payment onboard.

Sources: aa.com, The Wall Street Journal

Hotels offering wide array of incentives to attract guests

Today's economic environment has taken a toll on the lodging industry from big-name hotels to tiny B&Bs. Corporations are scrutinizing meeting budgets and plans with a new eye on perception as well as cost, and some individuals are replacing the summer vacation trips with "staycations." Just as last year, when the industry responded to soaring gas prices by offering gas cards ranging from USD \$10 to USD \$50, this year hotels are making some unprecedented offers in hopes of drawing tourists as well as corporate meetings to their properties to survive the economic slump.

For leisure travelers, the perks include offers of free nights, upgraded rooms, daily breakfast, spa treatments, rental cars, two-for-one deals, and—in some cases—use of luxury automobiles and video game systems, even in combination with discounted rooms.

Corporations and meeting planners have lots of deals to choose from as well; here is some of what is out there:

- Waiver of the fees assessed when fewer guests than booked for a meeting actually end up attending
- Discounts, doubling of reward points, and easing no-shows penalties—for events that meet certain capacity thresholds
- Discounts on total room bills and food and drink

With all of the incentives available, meeting package costs are down 10 to 20 percent from recent years.

Leisure travelers and corporate planners alike could well benefit from some of the various deals currently available.

Sources: Business Travel Executive, Baltimore Sun

Regional

Boston Logan Airport to add solar 'trees' to power parking garage

Boston's Logan International Airport is on the path toward more environmentally friendly operations. Later this year, the five-story terminal B garage will be home to 16 solar trees—solar panels mounted on air ventilation units on top of the garage.

The solar power is expected to produce 2.5 percent of the total energy used by the garage. In addition, energy-efficient LED lighting will be installed to replace the existing lighting in the garage over the next two years.

Sources: Boston Globe, bostonherald.com

International

EU and Canada reach 'open skies' agreement

The European Union (EU) and Canada recently signed an "open skies" agreement, which will "generate major benefits for consumers and airlines...and will make the EU-Canada aviation market one of the most open in the world," according to European Commission (EC) President Jose Manuel Barroso.

Similar to the March 2008 agreement between the EU and the United States, the agreement will ease restrictions on control and ownership of airlines. The Canada/EU agreement means that airlines from the two partners will be able to fly freely between any airport in the 27-country EU and any in Canada.

According to the EC, nine million people traveled between the EU and Canada in 2007. It predicts the agreement will generate an additional 500,000 passengers in its first year, and after a few years 3.5 million

annually. An increase in direct flights, more competition, and lower prices are expected.

Sources: ATW Online, Wall Street Journal

Government/Legislation

Reminder: passports now required at North American land/sea borders

As previously reported in *CWT Traveler*, effective June 1, North American travelers crossing U.S. and Canadian borders via land and sea will be required to present a valid passport or other government-approved documentation. The requirements are part of the latest phase of the U.S. government Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative (WHTI).

According to U.S. Customs and Border Protection, on the first day of implementation, 95 percent of travelers were compliant. For the time being, travelers who do not abide by the new requirements will receive a warning and be allowed to enter the countries by submitting proper identification such as a birth certificate and photo I.D. Individuals are informed of the new regulations and are given "Noncompliant" sheets. Travelers may face increasing border delays if they continue to travel without proper identification.

Customs experts say nearly half of Canadians have passports, whereas only a third of Americans do. Travelers should keep in mind the following information to prevent future travel delays.

Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative:

Applies to: Travelers 19 and older. Children 18 and under will need to present a birth certificate, naturalization certificate or passport.

Where: Canada, Mexico, Bermuda, Caribbean region (includes 17 nations)

Required to present: Passports, enhanced security driver's licenses, Canadian NEXUS or Free and Secure Trade (FAST) cards, or other approved identification (full details available [here](#)).

How to apply for a passport: Online, by mail or in person

Application timelines: U.S.: 4-6 weeks; Canada: 2-4 weeks

Cost: U.S.: USD \$75-\$100; Canada: CAD \$87-92

Keep in Mind:

It is recommended that travelers plan ahead and apply for passports early to avoid any potential future delays in processing. Urgent or expedited services are generally available at an extra charge.

Under certain circumstances, travelers are required to apply for a U.S. passport in person (i.e., applying for a passport for the first time; have a lost, stolen or damaged passport). Exceptions do apply to certain age groups, nationalities, cruise members, and members of the military.

For more information (including a complete list of acceptable documentation, passport agencies in your area, etc.) visit the following Web sites:

United States: Department of Homeland Security [Web site](#) or US Department of State [Web Site](#)

Canada: Passport Canada [Web site](#)

Both Canadian and U.S. Customs and Border Protection will continue outreach campaigns through the summer to inform travelers of the new passport requirements.

Sources: travel.state.gov, dhs.gov, thestar.com, news.yahoo.com, ctv.ca, ppt.gc.ca

Technology

Boeing expands in-cabin comforts

Travelers can look forward to more comfort and conveniences in-flight due to features built into Boeing's new workhorse 737 scheduled for service next year. Perhaps the most appreciated cabin convenience will be overhead bins that store much more than today's model. When opened, bins pivot down for easy loading. When closed, they rise to a space above at a level that makes it possible for passengers to stand up in their seats without bumping their heads.

Boeing's 787 Dreamliner, scheduled for release early next year, will have "dimming" windows. Instead of shades, travelers press a button and the window darkens gradually, giving the feeling of a sunset. The new windows are also larger than today's standard windows.

New Boeing aircraft are also meeting rising customer demand for in-flight Wi-Fi. For more information about the airlines' progress making Wi-Fi widely available, please read the additional article in this issue "[Sending and receiving email at 35,000 feet.](#)"

Sources: The Wall Street Journal, ABC News

Industry Trends/Innovations

On-time performance improves; DOT IG attributes to flight cutbacks

First quarter on-time arrival rates continue to trend upward for North American carriers. The following list ranks airlines based on their ability to arrive on time in accord with industry standards—meaning a flight arrives at or departs from the designated gate no more than 15 minutes later than the scheduled time. (U.S. airline statistics are compiled by the Department of Transportation's [DOT] Bureau of Transportation Statistics.)

Hawaiian Airlines	91.2
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Southwest Airlines	85.1
Pinnacle Airlines	83.2
United Airlines	80.4
Northwest Airlines	80.3
SkyWest Airlines	80.2
US Airways	79.6
Frontier Airlines	79.2
JetBlue Airlines	78.4
American Airlines	78.0
Delta Air Lines	77.8
AirTran Airways	77.4
American Eagle	77.4
Mesa Airline	77.0
ExpressJet Airlines	76.9
Continental Airlines	76.4
Air Canada	72.6
Alaska Airlines	72.6
Comair	69.1
Atlantic Southeast	68.9

In written testimony prepared for the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee's Subcommittee on Aviation, DOT inspector general (IG) Calvin Scovel III attributed the 2008/09 performance improvements primarily to flight cutbacks, not government initiatives to alleviate congestion.

At the May hearing, the Scovell laid out several opinions for the aviation subcommittee, the following among them:

- "The air travel experience in 2008...improved over 2007," and carriers continue to post year-over-year on-time performance improvements in 2009.
- Trends "were primarily driven by flight cutbacks that airlines implemented in the face of last year's unprecedented fuel prices and onset of the global economic downturn."
- Other contributing factors to the improved numbers included: scheduling practices, passenger volume, new runways at Washington-Dulles, Chicago O'Hare, and Seattle-Tacoma airports, and that, "Airlines also claim that new fees for checked bags have reduced the number of bags handled by the airlines and aided in the more timely operation of flights."
- Scovel expects on-time performance to hold or even improve further but predicts the delays will resume when passenger volumes again increase. And, "Although the current delay statistics and customer service trends look favorable, history shows that traffic will rebound given the intrinsic value of air transport to the nation's livelihood. Therefore, it is highly unlikely that the current positive trend can be sustained."

Scovel further explained that enhancing capacity and reducing delays system-wide “ultimately depends on the development and implementation of the Next Generation Air Traffic Management System...however this is a long-term complex effort that will require billion-dollar investments from both the FAA and airspace users.”

Sources: forbestraveler.com, Dallas Business Journal, BTS.gov, BTNonline, aircanada.com

Sending and receiving email at 35,000 feet

Some air carriers in the United States and Canada will be offering in-flight wireless Internet access on all flights within the next two years. California-based Virgin America has already accomplished this goal, and AirTran Airways expects to enable Wi-Fi on all flights by late July. The largest U.S. carriers, Delta Air Lines and American Airlines, offer Wi-Fi today on some flights and indicate that all flights will be equipped by 2011. United Airlines and Air Canada will begin installing the service later this year.

Expanding the use of Wi-Fi gives airlines another source of revenue, and travelers another resource for productivity on flights. Charges for Wi-Fi may vary based on the device being used—such as smartphones or handheld devices, vs. laptop computers. Charges may also vary by the length of the flight.

Travelers should be prepared to register with the applicable Wi-Fi service, either at the airport terminal kiosk or in flight through the Wi-Fi enabled personal device. Carriers suggest that travelers fully charge their devices before traveling. Travelers may also consider bringing a "cigarette lighter" style power adapter for recharging while in-flight (power availability may vary based on aircraft type).

Sources: New York Times, USA Today