

the transaction before engaging in social aspects of the transaction with the service provider.⁴¹

Safety and Security Strides

Realistically, the threat of terrorism will continue, so travelers will have no choice other than to accept a decrease in their privacy in exchange for greater security. Security will pervade but hopefully in the future will almost go unnoticed as technologies improve in all aspects of the tourism industry from attractions and sporting events to accommodations and transportation. Surveillance will also become common for all future events and many tourism attractions/congregating sites. In some locales, the future has arrived. “The average visitor to London . . . is now captured on video 300 times in a single day” (p. 16).¹⁸

Biometrics will become the common form of identification. Most countries will move to globally standardized electronic national identification cards in place of passports. These ID cards may also include driver’s license information along with fingerprint and/or retinal scan data. In addition, by choice, to achieve better connectedness and better service, travelers will carry more and more personal information from loyalty accounts to personal travel preferences on their smart phones. As security has tightened, airlines have restricted size and weight of baggage to conserve fuel and space. Although, front line airline service personnel have looked the other way as more and more luggage is carried on, this practice will have to cease for both security and operational efficiency reasons. In response, specialty freight companies will enjoy substantial increases in revenue as more and more travelers elect to ship their luggage and adventure “toys.”

Owing to the dominance and immediacy of global media, crisis events will have even greater impact on tourism revenues. In response to hyped 24-hour coverage of natural disasters and terrorism attacks, organizations, especially NTOs and their lower-level counterparts, will develop restoration and recovery programs with specialists who communicate through the broadcast and print media and use the power of the Internet to inform travelers about the condition of tourism resources and steps being taken to ensure the safety and security of visitors.⁴²

To guard against lost or stolen cash or traveler’s checks (for the minority of population still using them), we will move to a truly cashless society. In all venues, making purchases will be easier. Everything from your credit/debit card to your smart phone will be used to make purchases. Making purchases easier for customers means more revenues for service providers through lower transaction fees.

TOURISM IN ACTION

BIOMETRICS

Fingerprint scans are only the tip of the iceberg when it comes to enhanced security and service. Both employees and guests will find biometrics incorporated into the workplace and the guest experience. For safety and security concerns, even in the face of privacy concerns, operators are turning to biometrics: fingerprint scans, handprint scans, facial scans, and iris scans. With these new technologies, there is no more need for time clocks, keys, or entry cards. With the scan of facial features, the blink of an eye, the press of a finger, or the wave of a hand, entrance is approved and a time record is established. Once an individual’s personal profile (face, eye, finger, or hand) has been entered into a computer system, entry, checking in or checking out, and security are easily managed. Many countries have installed e-channels for their citizens and nonresident frequent visitors who can pass through immigration check points with the scan of travel documents and finger prints. This has speeded up the entry and exit time for travelers.

Sources: Based on Kirby, Adam. (2008, January). Buying into biometrics. *Hotels*, pp. 49–50; and Yu, Roger. (2008, February 5). Some guests can open doors in a blink. *USA Today*, p. 4B.