

Flight Information Technology

Does More Than Set Travelers at Ease

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Keeping air travelers informed of any gate changes, flight delays or cancellations is a top priority for US airports. When time is critical and surroundings are unfamiliar, people often rely on data screens throughout the airport - also known as multi-user flight information display systems or MUFIDS. These monitors provide passengers with guidance and up-to-date flight information.

As demand for air transportation continues to strengthen, consumer expectations for reliable, real-time flight information must keep pace. Over the last year, new flight information display screens known as FIDS - were installed primarily in the main terminal and central points of each concourse. Travelers, whether connecting through Atlanta to another destination or departing directly from "the world's busiest airport", expect immediate, accurate information about arrival and departures times. Providing passengers and the general public with clear, concise flight-



related information contributes to the overall travel experience and US airports both large and small are focused on replacing outdated systems and integrating new age technology, which can help make air travel more pleasurable and less stressful for their customers.

As airports worldwide strive to remain competitive and customer-focused, most are enhancing IT systems, expanding terminal facilities and enhancing passen-

ger amenities. Today's airports are exploring other uses for MUFIDS to maximize space and generate new revenue streams by placing graphic-rich travel or tourism related advertising on the LCD monitors.

Travelers at Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport have the benefit of viewing their flight information at various new locations via multi-user flight information display system (MUFIDS) throughout the airport including the transportation mall, international concourse and the corridors near ticket counters at Terminal North. MUFIDS



allow multiple airlines to display arrival, departure and gate information in one place, which is a benefit to their customers. In the past, air travelers had to be in a specific location to view these details. Today, airlines and airports realize the major benefit of having flight information in various locations in the airport.

The recent MUFIDS project our firm helped to complete at Hartsfield-Jackson International has helped the airlines and the Atlanta Airport provide greater access to critical flight information for the 230,000 passengers it serves each day. From the time you arrive at the airport to the moment you board your flight, the MUFIDS at Hartsfield-Jackson Airport helps to guide you through the departure process with up-to-the-minute visual facts from multiple airlines. Working in partnership with several firms including Infax, Inc. and TBI Airport Management, TDCSI played a key role in the implementation of this expanded MUFIDS system at the Atlanta Airport.

Designed to enhance communications to passengers MUFIDS integrates airline flight and arrival/departure gate data (transmitting the information via electronics or Web-based technology) directly to liquid crystal display (LCD) monitors from airline network databases. For many years, air travelers at Hartsfield-Jackson and airports nationwide have relied on FIDS to advise them when and where in the airport to go to catch their flight. Many of the newer systems can also provide high-quality graphics, audio and visual paging or messaging for the



hearing impaired.

Providing real-time updates of essential travel information is the main purpose of MUFIDS, however, airports realize these newer, high-tech systems can also help control the flow of traffic. Additionally, MUFIDS are sleeker, easier to read and maintain compared to older systems that use heavy, bulky monitors

that resemble tube TVs. While LCDs are a relatively new option the monitors are easily incorporated into airport kiosks or wall insets. Concerns about equipment and system failure due to overheating have been all but diminished because the new technology consumes low power. Some of the newer MUFIDS use software and video cabling for efficient remote management and maintenance these systems, which can be monitored, serviced and upgraded from a central control room. In short, the newer MUFIDS are helping to make life a little easier for airport IT administrators and travelers alike.

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