

SSI Orbit Podcast (00:01.866)

Have you ever wondered how when you book a flight through a travel agency, the airline actually knows that the agency is legitimate? Like for example, how does an airline in Singapore verify a travel agency in Brazil is who they claim to be in real time and at scale. And have you ever thought about what it would be like to walk through an airport without pulling out your passport once, but being able to check in, clearing security and boarding just using your face and the digital credential in your wallet?

So did you ever think about the sheer complexity of making any of this work? 190 or so countries, hundreds of airlines, thousands of airports, travel agencies, ground handlers, all speaking different languages. So who's trying to make all these systems trust each other? So today I'm lucky to have a guest from IATA, the International Air Travel Association, which represents nearly 300 airlines and over 80 % of global air traffic. My guest, Gabriel Marquis.

leads IATA's digital management initiatives. IATA has been working towards implementing the infrastructure that can make digital identity work across the entire aviation ecosystem, from the travel agency that sells you a ticket, to the border agent who checks your visa, to the biometric gate you walk through at the airport. So today we're going to explore the pilot projects that IATA has been pursuing over the past few years and is currently pursuing. We're going to talk about the technical decisions they've made.

and the massive coordination challenge of getting adoption in one of the world's most complex industries. So Gabrielle, let's start with the big picture. IATA touches almost every part of aviation. So how does digital identity play a role in IATA's modern airline retailing vision? And maybe what are some of the core problems that IATA is trying to solve?

Gabriel Marquie (01:50.18)

Yeah, sure. Thank you very much, Mathieu. Well, basically, IATA has been helping airlines or airlines have chosen IATA actually to help them structure. And as you mentioned, so usually if you look at local travel, you've got one train company taking most of the time on a trip within your own country or to the neighboring one.

and operations stop there. actually it means that whatever other distribution channels for that journey, they're local to the travel company, to the train company. And when you talk about airline business, then you start crossing borders and going away from your own market. So actually from the time we started flying planes,

across regions and across continents. There's been that problem of reaching out to the customers. And actually, sometime you couldn't go from your starting point to your destination directly. And so that means that operationally, so airline had to work with airline partners to get their joint customers from their journey to their destination.

So that's like operational collaboration between airlines. And then on the distribution, on the sales of the tickets, then you don't just sell directly, but all of that started before the internet. And

it's how you get the network of distributor in your partner's country to sell space in your own planes.

And when you start looking at these journeys, so if you wanted, how do you get a travel agency in Canada, maybe sending you a ticket on a journey to go to Singapore. And Canada might not take you there directly. Maybe it's going to be Canada taking you to Europe, where you're going to transfer in Frankfurt into Lufthansa Plains that's going to take you to your destination. And then...

Gabriel Marquie (04:15.575)

So that's when you start to have transitive trust and therefore need for some sort of network and trust inside that network for distribution partners into a third party countries that do business with one of your airline partner to get your passenger into your plane eventually.

that started actually before the internet. So that's the journey, our trust inside private networks. So let's say that the challenge there was mainly identification. So how do you know, how do you uniquely identify the partners? Because you know that once they're authenticated inside the networks, then the only problem is identification. And that's how the...

let's say the industry has been built over the decades since the 60s based on identification service. But obviously, like any business, it's been transforming over the last 20 years with less and less closed ecosystem, but leveraging more what openness can bring. So new actors, new players, new channels.

And then, well, the trust is not granted anymore. And that's where, that was pure identification challenge and turns into a digital identification challenge. Or how can you authenticate or verify the identity of your partners live, not just trust access into the network, but actually verify at every transaction with whom you interact with. And that's, let's say, the wider

So basically the fact that the industry started so early and had to transition from these early days pre-internet to now open network interaction, that means that there is actually a transition that needs to happen and the opportunities that comes with it with digital identity. So it's got some, let's say, and challenges there.

Gabriel Marquie (06:41.861)

but maybe we'll touch on that. Obviously, when you want to transform operational systems, there are some challenges on the way, but it builds on solid foundations, and that's the opportunity lies. pre-existing collaboration framework or joint identity system for an entire industry is a really strong foundation.

having common, well, trust in common vetting processes, in common onboarding processes, are some actually strong foundation to move that to digital space and not having to build it from the ground up. So, sometimes we last, so it feels easier to start from a clean sheet, but when you've got some...

strong foundation to build upon. It's also a great opportunity.

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I mean, like, IAATA has been around for quite some time and I think we often get caught in the standards and being able to create interoperability in the digital identity space. But I feel like these concepts have been something that have been core to IAATA from the start within the specific domain of aviation and within the different types of participants in that ecosystem.

Airlines are members of IATA. What are some other members of IATA? Like it would be helpful if you could just give a picture of who are the different types of participants within the IATA ecosystem and kind of what is that value prop that they get from being part of IATA. And then I'm assuming being part of the, this shared process kind of initiative at IATA lets them.

reduce friction or access opportunities that they wouldn't be able to without it.

Gabriel Marquie (08:46.328)

Yeah, actually just to precise, IATA is the International Air Transport Association. So IATA members are only airlines that need to clear certain bars. Well, collaboration is key. I think I quite like that parallel. But anyone that has ever worked at an airport knows that you don't get a passenger on a plane and a plane to take off just by yourself. You need to collaborate across the main.

And that's what actually is the essence of the AIATA Strategic Partnership Program. So the idea is that even though airline are AIATA members, AIATA's mission is to advocate for the industry, define standards. So airline member define standard under the AIATA standards conference, and AIATA provide solutions for the industry where needed.

we do that working with the entire value chain. And so we framed this collaboration through the IATA Strategic Partnership Program that actually opens the door to stakeholders beyond the airline industry, or beyond the airlines themselves, and offers the opportunity to contribute to standards working group or technology exploration.

When you talk about digital identity, it's heavily technical. It's always bringing people to the understanding of the value proposition of the technology, as the people digest that and look at what can be their future business processes, leveraging these opportunities. And then once you work with the business people on that target vision, actually,

work more in detail on the technology. And I think that's how actually the Strategic Partnership Program helps bring all the people together to iterate around there. And it's actually bringing the perspectives that enable to build that vision, shape that target and state, and then make it materialize and bring it to life through...

Gabriel Marquie (11:12.762)

technology proof of concepts. And that's something we've been doing a lot over the last couple of years on digital identity as there is an increased understanding from the business stakeholders on the value proposition. Travelers start to get more and more familiar with digital identity tools. And we start also beyond that seeing that demand these pools who are

passenger surveys. think there is appetite for digitalization, for contactless travel journeys. And that's where actually people can come together to accelerate that journey, showing that actually the tool to make that happen are here, they're mature, they're flexible, they can be baked into traditional airline IT or legacy airline IT.

and be part of that journey. So actually, it's really exciting, I think, for me to bring in people from different vertical, different industries inside that ecosystem. Because as you said, so when you go under the hood of air travel, it's really exciting. There is a lot to learn, a lot to improve. also, can experience that transformation yourself.

And I think it's really relatable to everybody. And it's a huge market. So I think there is place for everybody to come and contribute. And I think that's the value that the people that join us see in there.

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And like trust is really about building upon relationships over time. really trust is an evolving personal concept that builds over relationships. Like if you look at other industries, even like credit facilities or payments, you look at innovations that happened over the decades with networks that don't enable the, you know,

banks or credit card issuers to have direct relationships with merchants. You get something like Visa, you get something like MasterCard, these networks that come under, and they bring a lot of trust to the ecosystem altogether. And then they facilitate the reconciliation of payments at the end of the day. Do you view IATA as kind of similar within the aviation ecosystem where the ecosystem is just ever-changing of different types of participants? Like we talked about just going from regional to international and then

with different digital innovations. And I'm sure today, just what we're looking at the top of the line travel agencies, seems like there's going to be a lot more now happening through different LLM or AI tools as well. the environment is just always changing. does I add a kind of, are there some similarities to like a visa network to what I added does like, does I add a facilitate payments to do, do you do more shared services than what would have been described so far within the ecosystem?

Gabriel Marquie (14:25.114)

Yes, so actually, really much airlines come together under IATA to agree on framework. And that's what airline is defined under the standards governance as resolution, when all airlines come together and actually agree on certain processes or let's say trust framework. And you've seen that actually, well, that's been the mission.

of IATA from the early days, is enable a travel agency in Canada, as if I go back to my example, to sell a ticket to a passenger that would fly on an Air Canada flight and then transfer on a Lufthansa flight. And the travel agency collects the money, and then some of that money then eventually needs to go to the first airline on that trip and the second airline on that trip. And then, well, it's a network.

because we've got that trip, you've got Air Canada with other travel agency partners, you've got Lufthansa, well, that same travel agency, Masel ticket with other airlines. And at the end, you've got, well, you need to do settlements across all these actors. And really much so under the IATA passenger agency conference, airlines have agreed on the rules.

that governs credit facilities among travel agencies and airlines and among airlines themselves. So that's a framework on trust on payment side that is in place and that is supported by the IATA accreditation system. And yes, we quite often draw the parallel on the identity space with this.

payment of financial trust. if we've got private actors issuing digital identities, and then these digital identities get consumed by travel agencies or airlines when you book your flight and when you're checking and then connecting carriers and trust, that information that's collected by another actor to get you on a plane.

Gabriel Marquie (16:49.91)

there is a clear parallel where we could see some digital identity trust framework being put in place by the airline and the airline umbrella like they've done on the financial side, let's say. And actually, the foundation of this has already been laid out on the passenger side with a one ID.

standards where airline have been actually defining recommended practice and target processes for digitalization of admissibility, contactless travel, biometric handling. And so these recommended practice and business standards are the foundation to eventually agree on a common trust framework for a traveler's ID. And this...

And obviously, this trust on Traveler would naturally transfer to trust in business partners. So we would have a similar framework for travel agency verification, where airline also today have operationalized and developed as the verification of travel agencies, and then could rely on

well, GDOL IDs on top of this identity and vetting process that's already in place.

SSI Orbit Podcast (18:23.098)

So I know Ayada is advocating for digital identity innovation, both in B2B scenarios and B2C scenarios, before going into some of the B2C examples and talking about contactless travel like you just mentioned. I would love to just dive a little bit deeper into the B2B and who are the participants in there?

What is the use case? It would be helpful if you could give a bit of a primer on the new distribution capability and DC, like what that is when that went into place, because I think that's core to some of the B2B use cases that are being pursued. And then just to describe how digital identity really up levels that existing program.

Gabriel Marquie (19:13.346)

Indeed. So maybe going back to the history of our private network for travel agency to sell tickets. So airline distribution started, as I was saying, in the 60s. And actually, you had the key global distribution services or GDS that were actually providing the capabilities to travel agencies who actually individual in a small shop in your

local area or communities that would get access to the airline inventory to be able to sell tickets. And this was pre-internet. So actually this distribution network used to pull cables to the office of these people so that they can connect to the network and access that content. so that resulted in a, let's say, a concentration of the capability and also some...

let's say over the time lack of evolution of what can be distributed through these channels as they've not involved much over the time. So that's where about 10 to 15 years ago, airline decided to come together and say, okay, we need to leapfrog that current distribution mechanism systems that concentrate all or the majority of

the distribution channels for travelers to buy tickets, let's say, and have some new distribution capabilities over more modern API-based channels. And so that new distribution capabilities, what was called the NDC programs that brought to life this new standard, let's say, to

for travel agency to interact with airline content so that airline can distribute wider types of offering, combined offering, and also distributed to whoever is willing to put that in front of the traveler and enabling new type of online travel agencies that are much closer to what you and I are.

Gabriel Marquie (21:39.736)

are doing when we go and shop online versus, let's say, historical airline travel agencies that were not so much adapted to the new traveler or consumer expectation. So that's basically what NDC was about. that actually

been widely adopted now throughout the industry. And as I was mentioning initially, so distribution was done in closed networks. But now anyone setting up a website can become an online travel agency. And then these online travel agencies go and fetch content from Values Airline, from Values Travel Provider to combine

maybe plane ticket, ferry, bus, hotel. So if you think you're flying somewhere to go on a Greek island, and you might get a full package all the way with all the combination of these services. And so which means that you can have actors that are now able to bring your product to market as an airline that are coming left, right, front, and center.

And they might come via proxies or intermediaries that aggregate some of the content. And so the challenge there is, so it's great, it's rich. So you get much more rich through different channels that might be getting to new customers. But the question is, do you have at the end of that pipe a reseller that is going to serve your customers the way you expect?

that's not going to be giving false representation about what type of products they get. So if someone tells you, you've got that cheap flight, fully refundable, but actually what you get at the end is a non-refundable flight, then as the airline, you're the ones that need to deal with an unhappy customer and not that online travel agency. So there is that duality, let's say, from the airline point of view to...

Gabriel Marquie (24:06.679)

maximize the reach and the opportunities for people to sell your content. But at the same time, you want to be sure that the business partners that sell seats in your plane do it the right way. And so that's why there is this need on the airline side to be able to control who's selling to the customer at the end. And because these relationships are not

peer-to-peer, they get intermediated. There is a need to verify for yourself as an airline who was in touch with your customer. And that requires some proof in intermediated transaction. that's where we, well, actually, airline have identified as G-TOL identity was

bubbling up, let's say, seven to 10 years ago that there was an opportunity there, and they started to come into the radar of distribution or people in charge of distribution of airline tickets. And as this got, the idea got mature, refined. That's how we started to put in place a program of work around travel agency, digital identity, to provide these tools.

to the airlines and to the travel agencies. that work actually has been accelerating. So unfortunately, COVID was a tough time for the industry. So there was a bit of a slowdown there. But at the same time, it was an accelerator for G-TOL identity in other domains. And it made the technology mature and the understanding of G-TOL mature across

the wider population. And that's how post-COVID in 2022, we started working more in details on how to implement that practically. And while leading an airline under the IATA Passenger Service Conference and the Shop Order Pay Standards Board, I've been looking at target operational model to verify the identity of

Gabriel Marquie (26:33.209)

travel agencies in distribution channels, and I had the chance to do the work with some of these airlines on describing these target processes, updating new distribution capabilities, so the NDC standards to be able to carry the digital identity of the end sellers and to test that. we've actually...

developed the capability to issue this digital identity over variable credential to travel agencies and tested that actually with Turkish Airlines, with British Airways and actually identified the next step. once you start getting into the, let's say the high level use case and then people start to understand a bit more the...

the capability of the technologies, they start to think of adjacent use cases. And I would say that's a bit where we are. When we're looking at the travel agency's digital ID, then other channels of interaction between airline and travel agencies came into the picture. So you also have airline with direct agency portals. Onboarding.

travel agency employees directly onto their channels to do direct business also. That's also a new type of, or let's say, another type of interaction airlines have with their business partners. And they really wanted to make sure that whatever solution is implemented or framework is implemented for the industry, it covers all angles. And that's why, so actually, end of last year, beginning of this year,

We run a proof of concept of travel agency employees onboarding under the Data and Technology Proof of Concept program. actually, Air Canada, Turkey, Sharia, and Qatar Airways have implemented that. So actually, from that topic, from that solution we had on agency digital identity, looking at how that links to employee digital identity and being able to test that.

Gabriel Marquie (28:59.031)

That's something that has, let's say, grown the ecosystem of use cases or areas of application of travel agencies' digital identity, application for the leading airline. And actually now there is that combination. we had the entity digital ID being verified through distribution channels. We looked at the...

employee verification on direct agency portal. And right now, so there is a third, let's say, phase of testing that's ongoing to check how the travel agency employee can be verified in intermediated distribution channels. So that's what we're working on now.

and that POC should be showcased in April along with a few others. So I would say now the level of maturity and understanding is quite high. There is a good coverage. Let's say we've identified the solution for the two key channels, and right now we're testing that this solution are

are not working in silos, but they work across because there are many operational models. And before your operational research thing, and if it's to last for 60 years, like the previous technology standards we've seen coming in the industry, where the industry was leading, you want to make sure that it's designed properly. So that's where we are.

SSI Orbit Podcast (30:48.506)

And we've been fortunate at Northern Block to be part of the Data and Technology Strategic Partnership working on this use case for the past little while. We did a nice demonstration with

Air Canada earlier this year at IATA's World Data Symposium, which was awesome. It's been quite a good learning.

opportunity to really think about just again, the concept of shared process. If you look at the amount of costs that goes into onboarding travel agencies and intermediaries, and then just even managing the life cycle of that, it's very expensive for every single airline, but they all have to do it. So if there's a way for them to all collaborate on some framework where they don't have to directly individually all do it, but they could all rely on a shared process, I think there's tons of cost benefits to them.

are there also other downstream impacts like possibly fraud reduction from this type of thing? Or could there be loyalty benefits? I'm not sure about, what may be some other downstream impacts of actually achieving this shared process, across the board between, airlines and travel agencies and moving from just the direct relationship to more of a network approach.

Gabriel Marquie (32:12.346)

So there is, well, it's definitely there. And what we could see really was actually that airlines that took part in that process, in that POC with us actually were really convinced. And right now there is a bit of a pool. And it's really good to see that internally there is a strong case for each of these airlines individually, even without looking.

at the mutualization, but just having the identification services that I've provided today, having a layer of digital identity on top just for them is a huge, actually is making the case individually. I think that's where it starts. Then when you...

Actually, when you see a framework of digital identity recognition, that's where you can much more easily allow new entrants in the ecosystem. It brings in more innovation because as soon as you start opening the door to third parties or to new entrants, is, well, you need to build that trust, as you say. And actually having...

a digital identity trust framework brings that almost instantaneously. And that's really much where we see the wider industry business case, which is by making the...

Gabriel Marquie (34:05.05)

Where we start?

So that's where we see the wider industry business case by leveling the playing field and making sure that any trusted travel agency can then start interacting with airline and aggregators and third parties through any channel. And so this way you can have actually the best servicing for the travelers. if a travel agency is sitting one way but needs to go direct to the airline, then

to have some last minute servicing for the customer, then there is no question, are you the right agent? Are you allowed? You booked through that channel, but now you're interacting directly

on my portal to do something last minute for the customer. Are you allowed to do that? Are you part of this agency or not? I don't want you to disrupt the journey or the booking of someone else. And that's also one of the future benefits, which is once you've got that

instant identity verification, you can start offering more flexible business processes that in the end would result in better customer satisfaction, potentially last minute upsell. So that's actually opening the door to more revenue generation opportunities. So I think if you look at it usually, so it starts, yes, as you were saying from...

an operational immediate cost reduction. That's where the first business case is made. Then you've got network effect. So more collaboration, new entrants, more innovation. And then eventually at the end, better customer experience, more potential for upsales. actually, we start to be really far away from a pure identity benefit, but by having

Gabriel Marquie (36:02.476)

a well-functioning ecosystem. That's where we can better serve the customer and therefore have more loyalty into brands and new opportunities for ourselves.

SSI Orbit Podcast (36:17.223)

Great. If we shift now to more of the B2C use cases, there seems like a much more complex environment than the B2B one. Maybe it's not, you could tell me, but we're talking about crossing borders. We're talking about airlines. We're talking about airports. We're talking about ground control. We're talking about the passenger. We're talking about all sorts of parties and systems.

that need to work together, all the touch points during that journey. And you could even extend to some of the things you mentioned earlier, when you're booking a trip, the air travel is one part, but your trip is not yet complete. You may be needing to take ground transport. You may be needing to rent a vehicle. You may be needing to stay at a hotel or an Airbnb or whatever the case is. And so we've talked about B2B and what IATA as the International Air Transport Association is doing.

I know there's other governing bodies in the industry, another one being the International Civil Aviation Organization. So I think acronym time here, we had IATA, we have ICAO, and there's another organization in the space that also has invested in digital identity, CITA, which is the Societe Internationale de Telecommunications Aéronautique. There's also work happening in the European Union right now in some large scale pilots like

the aptitude large scale pilot. So it seems like there's a lot of different entities, a lot of different governing bodies. And if you look at the three that I had mentioned between IATA, IKO and CETA, they all have international in their names. So they all have international coverage, although they have different scope of governance. And so it may be useful before going a little deeper into the B2C use cases.

that have been pursued and what the roadmap is for that just to better understand the overall landscape because it seems like with all these different governing bodies that govern different areas, do they all need to work together in some regard? What is everyone kind of doing, collaborating, learning from each other, maybe aligning on standards? So very large question, but maybe just a lay of the land before we go a little bit deeper into.

SSI Orbit Podcast (38:43.051)
any B2C use cases.

Gabriel Marquie (38:47.13)

Yeah, sure. think if we step back and due to its unique nature, I was saying, for the transportation side, actually the airline industry is not just a private sector industry on its own. Actually, it started as emerging out of the military activities of states when they were...

having the first aircraft flying around. So it was really much a national prerogative or a state prerogative to fly aircraft around. then eventually all the national carriers or aircraft operators started to be privatized. And so they went from a regime of governance that was purely

public bodies governing the industry to being more private entities like. But they this historical, let's say, legacies that got carried around. which means that states used to delegate part of their function to airline because they were just an extra extension of the state. And we see that

still being the case in the passport checks. If you want, so you're going to fly a plane, you're going to come into my country, and therefore as government to protect my country, I need to make sure that all the people that come in via transport have the right to come and fly into my country. because airlines used to be...

owned by the state, that delegation of duty from the border force to the airline was just natural. It was like, well, just another government entities taking part into the government job. And that, if you want these airline obligations, so already regulated under ICAO, the International Civil Aviation Organization, that, for instance,

Gabriel Marquie (41:11.714)

in the facilitation annex 9 indicates that aircraft operator must check that the traveler is in possession of his travel document, the passport, before they board the plane. So if you want that kind of regulation that is governed under ICAO as a United Nations Agency for Air Transport.

But then, it's more, so that was from states. you want, ICAO is a UN agency, the members of the International Civil Aviation Organization are member states or state representative that agree among states on how they want things to be operated. And so when it came more from a,

from an industry from the ground up. So airline then come under the IATA umbrella to define the common business processes together as standard. So if you want, you can see the ICAO

standards as state standards and the IATA standards as airline standards. But as we're saying, these things need to...

work together and they need to work well for an airline industry, modern airline industry, which is an industry of private actors that have competitions that want to provide good service to customers and that's where the evolution needs to happen and some of the processes that were imposed in aircraft operator need to be well as

state actors need to be more organized when we talk about private entities providing services to travelers. So that's, let's say, bit the context between IATA and IKO. And then what we do, yes, under the IATA umbrella is to ensure that when we digitalize processes like...

Gabriel Marquie (43:37.019)

or artifacts like the passport, digitalization is making things better for the travelers and for the industry. And actually, it's a great topic to be working on because it's not a zero-sum game. I think there is really opportunity for everybody to win.

for the travellers to have a better experience, for the airline processes to be more efficient, and for the states also, that today are more and more driven toward efficiency, to be able to have that efficiency while still ensuring they can meet all their mandates in protecting their national space. that's something we do when we engage with IKO.

on digitalizing the passport, on making sure that the digital passport standard is at least as good as the physical passport standard and that this ecosystem that we've got in the future builds on what we've got today. And I think the passport is great because it's an international recognized credential that is strong, that is secure.

And actually, has value beyond just crossing border. I mean, we all use our passport to open bank accounts, to prove our address. It's basically the highest level, well, almost the most secure credential we've got in our wallet today. And we've got the flexibility to use it in many places.

And it's really one key point as we work through digitalization to make sure that the digital tools we get are at least as good as the one we've got today in the physical world. And so that's what we work with with IKO. But then, like in every transformation or global transformation, it's then down to each member state.

Gabriel Marquie (45:55.419)

implement or each state to then roll out the solution to their own citizens. And so each one has its own interest, its own use case, its own speed of adoption. And so what we do is to ensure that the early implementers

get it right because it will always be a blueprint for the one we follow. Or at least a reference point. So if you've got a high bar reference point that anyone that come after can only do as

good, if not better. And that's why we really engage with the European activities around the European digital identity wallet because they are now going to...

be making a digital identity wallet to all European citizens and residents by the end of next year. And I've just kicked off a large scale pilot that would look at digital passports, airline processes. And we think that's a huge opportunity for everybody that's interested in air travel or in travel full stop.

to make that materialize because we've got implementer states, we've got private actors, and we've got at the same time IKO technical standards being developed for the G-TOL Passport. So we've got a really good opportunity to bring everybody around the table to design the best.

digital passport ecosystem for the world with all the interested parties. So that's, I would say, what is the state of play around the digital passport and the activities we've got in Europe. Now, in terms of digital interaction, and that's talking a lot about the passport, which is mainly about border crossing.

Gabriel Marquie (48:18.21)

there are quite a few interactions before you get to that border crossing. So when you buy your ticket, it's in your name. Then airlines need to, well, states actually mandate airlines to collect some passenger data for the border force to be able to do the screening in advance of who's going to come through the border and if there is an issue.

points that issue first so that people don't come to the border and then get turned away. So it's better if you can be told in advance if you're good to come or not. And so in this interaction, you need some identity verification. It's linked to your passport, but it's not as strong as a check as a border crossing.

And so that's where there are opportunities actually to digitalize some of the process, leverage a digital passport copy that might not come from the passport issuer. But if someone is able to read the chip in your passport and create a copy from it, then you can have some transitive trust in that digital copy of your passport. That is already really good for most of the airline interaction.

And well, I think the announcement from Google and Apple just a couple of weeks ago to provide a digital copy of US passports, of the passport to US citizens, respectively, there's a Google and Apple wallet, is actually opening the door to this. And it's also leading the way. So it might be a good.

option for some, in some jurisdiction, it might need to be other provider, but I think it's a good blueprint that will showcase that actually you can have digital passport copy available at scale with a good enough level of assurance for most private party interactions and get the ball rolling. I think it's...

Gabriel Marquie (50:34.648)

It's also showing the way of what can be done to states that would want to do this on their own or want to provide a certain framework for their citizens. And I think it's good to have these options out there because it increases general public awareness. It provides some tools that can be leveraged and gets the ball rolling towards a full digitalization.

SSI Orbit Podcast (51:07.123)

That was super helpful. so it seems based on your description, there's going to be different credentials with different assessed levels of assurances in different places. Nation states may issue these types of credentials directly to a nation state wallet or to private sector wallets, just like other private sector organizations may create.

copies of a passport, example, like Apple, Google are doing, and these may be sufficient to be consumed in certain interactions. And so what does this look like from an airline perspective? Airlines really care about loyalty. They really care about having the direct interaction between them and between their customer. I mean, just by seeing

the loyalty programs and the networks of loyalty programs that exist today, but also just the investments that are going into airline mobile applications and really connecting that to the in-flight experience and everything. Like there is a lot of emphasis on that direct interaction with the traveler and being able to personalize experience with the traveler.

Do you see a world where the airlines will just all have wallet capabilities built into their own application for certain purposes? Or are there use cases around that? Or do you see them being more just relying parties, being able to verify proofs of credentials that are coming from other places? And it may be interesting just to talk about what are the types of things that are going to be credentialized within.

the whole B2C value chain. We talked about e-passport. I'm sure we could talk about the same thing for copies of visas. Perhaps biometric images could be put into credentials. I don't know. But what are all the different types of credentials and how will airlines interact with all these things?

Gabriel Marquie (53:09.755)

Yes, so there is always, let's say, an option which is to create, well, we got the opportunity to leverage credentials for everything we do paper-based today that takes more time and has more friction. But there is also the, let's say, opportunity to do away with some of these credentials.

It's always a question of transition, what's most efficient, and also creating the awareness among the traveling public of the transition or things change. you don't want to... Well, people that are used to or travel from time to time, that are used to a boarding pass, and if you don't have boarding pass anymore all of a sudden, then you might create some disruption or you might have processes that are the...

that strongly requires this boarding pass. But there is one of, let's say, a longer-term view, which is maybe we could do away with some of these artifacts if you've got good digital identity ecosystems. Because, well, do I need to give you a new ID because you're a frequent flyer? Or could I just ask who you are and say, hey, Matthew, you're...

I really love your customer of hours. I'm really pleased to have you. Rather than saying, do you have your unique ID in our system of records so that we can recognize if you're a good customer of ours. So I think there is an angle there, which is to rethink some of the customer centricity when we've got good GDOL ID foundations. But then there is also a way of just kick-starting it.

by replicating or let's say digitalizing the paper credential we got. And usually that's way it starts. And so we've talked a lot about the passport paper credential being digitalized that naturally expands to the boarding pass wherever it is needed. Actually, in the visa application process, you quite often

Gabriel Marquie (55:32.621)

upload a passport scan and booking confirmation. So as soon as you get into the visa application process, you've got booking credentials that come into place, attesting that you've bought a certain itinerary during, then sometime you need proof of accommodation, that you're going to stay in a certain place. And then at the end of that, there is

and quite often an electronic travel authorization that's returned from the state to the traveler. And then eventually that needs to be presented to the airline at the check-in counter if there is no efficient way to digitalize that. So actually all this PDF exchange or exchange of pictures with friction, with time, could be replaced with instant processes.

with good G-torch identity frameworks. So that's just a starting point. And then on the operational side, indeed, once we've been able to clear on lines that you're to travel, is how do we enable you to walk through the airport with as little friction as possible? And so it's a question of, yeah, can you just

send your details in advance to the airport touch point so that they know that you are going to board a flight behind that gate and therefore you can enter that terminal across that immigration exit and then board that plane or even before that just drop a bag before you go through security. And so there are options there as to leverage biometric. You could just share in advance.

the little information necessary for that, which is just the equivalent of your boarding pass and your biometric associated with your passport, if passport is needed. And let's say that's the most convenient way to achieve it. Now, we see in some places some limitation to this type of biometric processing.

Gabriel Marquie (57:54.683)

And that's where if there are constraints to implement that, we can have some sort of tap and go options that should be much nicer than having to hand over your phone with your mobile boarding pass and your passport and everybody. And you've got 300 people in a row that goes through that clunky process. And where we could have like a simple tap and go there.

And so that's just like the plane, let's say, straight process just to fly. But then you can see all around that all the interaction with duty-free shops that might need to verify part of the information of the flight you're on. So usually you tend to hand over your full passport and your full boarding pass, and that gets, well...

in the good scenario just looked at, if not scanned somewhere just behind the counter. And yeah, so there is huge opportunities there for data minimization. And then if we talk about connected journeys, well, you might have a car rental just behind this. You might have a hotel check-in. And then that's where we see well opportunity for a much more integrated solution. So you could have.

Your booking confirmations that get reused by whatever end-of-the-year or third-party company is ending the car rental versus the ones that sold you the service. Then you might have hotel car keys that are already digitalized along wallets, so you can look for fully combined digital tools and credentials.

SSI Orbit Podcast (59:45.906)

Yeah. I mean, it seems like an inevitability that all this kind of falls into place at some point. And it also seems like it's not like it's going to be a, like a zero to a hundredth right away. There's these little incremental steps that, will keep improving the existing experiences. It seems like it's not a rip and replace. It's just improvements that will continue to happen. so really reducing friction in the whole.

travel journey is something that I think everyone involved in that ecosystem is trying to do anyways. There are business problems they're trying to solve and there's just new tools to perhaps do it a bit better. As we look forward over the next few years, I think you mentioned that there was a slowdown in travel during COVID. I think that air travel now, correct me if I'm wrong, but I think it's higher than it's ever been.

to today, it's gone back pre-COVID levels and perhaps even higher.

Gabriel Marquie (01:00:47.418)

Yeah, that's even from a couple of years ago. And actually, part of the challenge and the reason for the biometric processing initiative is the doubling of air transport in the next 10 to 15 years. yeah, it's a growing industry as always.

SSI Orbit Podcast (01:01:09.169)

So it's a crazy growing industry. So as you look forward as the digital identity lead at IATA, what does the next few years look like for IATA? Are there systems that are being put into place? Is

there going to be just expansion on current use cases? What are some of the challenges that you think will have to be solved over the next little while? Or what does the roadmap look like?

You could also maybe end with just a call to action. I know there's tons of collaboration that IATA is facilitating within the industry. And so as you talk through kind of what's ahead, I'm certain there may be some listeners here that may have interest in collaborating or participating in one way or another. yeah, what's happening over the next little while.

Gabriel Marquie (01:02:04.314)

So really what we see right now picking up is leading airline launching contactless travel initiatives and partners. And there is what a scaling and a network effect coming with that, but also some underlying capabilities that are necessary for the industry to be able to scale fast.

And I would say that's the focus right now. So we've launched a contactless travel directory to be able to support actually that trust framework we've been talking about on the Traveler Geotour identity front. And so also bringing in certification for all the actors involved and supporting.

supporting adoption. So actually we're lining up all the standards, all the learnings from the POCs and all the services we can to support everybody that wants to get on the journey of implementing contactless travel and passenger digital identity verification to make it a reality. So that's...

We're working hard with a big group right now, but six leading airlines on this. We aim to showcase it at the World Data Symposium in April in Singapore. So I hope you'll be able to join us there. But if not, from there, we're at making that, well, bringing all that knowledge from this group of leading airlines to the world.

and enable any fast follower to be there in the coming months beyond that. So that's, I would say, is the focus right now and probably for the next 18 months to really kickstart that global rollout. So move from sporadic pilots to actually more coordinated rollout.

Gabriel Marquie (01:04:28.314)

of travel and digital identity usage across the world. So that's where the focus is. On the digital passport front, there are still some challenges and some work that needs to be done with everybody. And I would say that's where we're more engaged on the advocacy side and actually facilitating

multi-stakeholders discussion between state, technical standards developer, and leading airline in regional ecosystems. So that's what we do in Europe with aptitude. But we're actually looking forward to get that to expand to other regions. So actually we'll be reaching out. And if anyone that listens is...

is actually involved or keen to move that forward, please reach out. So we're looking at ensuring that any test of digital passport across the world is done in coordination as the traveler in mind and actually that all these learnings feedback into the IKO work.

so that we can really fast track having a G-TOL passport on your phone as an alternative to the booklet. So would say that's where the focus is going to be for the next two years. And to what we've mentioned before on the B2B space, then there's going to be the identification of what is the launch use case for...

for digital identities there. Are we starting on the employee side, on the organization side? So that's also a strong area of focus, even though in a different area of IATA, but also a strong one.

SSI Orbit Podcast (01:06:42.417)

Yeah, thank you for being an advocate for our industry and really bridging digital identity, digital trust with air travel. And I think that the infrastructure, the progress that's being made both in B2B and B2C use cases across this industry while navigating the complex choreography of standards that we talked about a little bit today, all the stakeholders, all the regulatory requirements across.

you know, close to 200 countries is a massive undertaking, but you could really see the future of air travel being with more digital trust in place and really improving business opportunities for those involved and improving the travel experience for the traveler. So I really appreciate you doing this with me today. And thank you for everything you do.

Gabriel Marquie (01:07:29.071)

Yeah. Well, thank you very much. And also, if I may, thank you very much for actually having that podcast. You've been leading the way and bringing people to come and share for everybody to learn. So that's been valuable to me over the years. And I hope we keep being valuable to other people. And also, well,

more personally on your side with NorthernBlock. I think you've been a really good partner of the industry. You've worked a lot with many stakeholders and contributed to helping the industry moving forward. So that's really good to have you around. Thank you.

SSI Orbit Podcast (01:08:10.76)

Thank you again.