

IBM Helps Jetstar Offer Mobile SMS Boarding to Passengers

Now passengers can board their flights via SMS no matter what type of mobile phone they have at 23 Australia and New Zealand airports

Sydney, Australia – 23 May 2011

IBM (NYSE: IBM) today announced that it has helped Jetstar Airways expand its self service offering for passengers to include SMS boarding – a world-first solution. The technology allows passengers to quickly board their flights, using any kind of mobile phone, at self-service kiosks over 20 airports across Australia and New Zealand.

Using industry first technology, SMS boarding is now available to any Australian and New Zealand domestic Jetstar passenger with a mobile phone, utilising advanced self-service kiosks that IBM has built for the airline. With the new SMS technology, travellers can quickly confirm their identity, choose their seats, print boarding passes and bag tags, drop off bags at the counter, and proceed straight to their departure gate. The process takes an average of just 12 seconds per passenger now, compared with 27 seconds using the previous check-in kiosks and 65 seconds for a full-service check-in.

The smart scanning technology allows a passenger's secure information to be read even from mobile handsets that lack the ability to display graphical barcodes. Passengers simply place their phones in front of a camera built into the kiosk; the SMS confirmation message is photographed and the text it contains is analysed.

While smartphones can display machine-readable barcodes, research suggested only 7 percent of Australians subscribe to mobile data plans. This severely restricted the use of barcode-based mobile check-in solutions. The SMS technology works with the vast majority of mobile phones today despite the differences in nuances between each kind of mobile phone.

The system, which includes Universal Scanner technology from Australian company Sissit Group, uses optical character recognition to analyse an image sent to the passenger's mobile phone via SMS messaging.

"Jetstar is continually looking for ways to give passengers more control over their airport experience, and we have been working with IBM to move to a 100 per cent self-service environment to help passengers get through the airport and to their flight as quickly and smoothly as possible," said Bruce Buchanan, Jetstar Group CEO. "By leveraging innovative technology and IBM's strong technical and implementation skills, we have been able to extend the benefits of SMS boarding to all Australian and New Zealand domestic travellers, regardless of the mobile phone they're using."



The self-service platform is built on IBM WebSphere technologies. IBM Global Business Services managed the integration of the Universal Scanner and the retrofitting of high-resolution camera hardware into over 140 heavily used IBM N Series Common Use Self Service Kiosks across capital city and regional airports. The kiosks also boost check-in speed by 300 percent.

"Being able to use your mobile phone for check-in, whether it's a smartphone or not, can help improve the travel experience, giving travellers the convenience they desire when flying," said Doug Regan, Partner, IBM Global Business Services. "This new technology is an industry innovation that will help Jetstar deliver a check-in experience that's consistent across their Australia and New Zealand domestic networks. The challenge was getting a high level of reliability in reading the many types of handsets available today."

IBM is also in the process of implementing an improved check-in experience for Jetstar parent company Qantas in nearly 40 airports across the region.

