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Scandinavian Airlines conducts customer testing of biometry

Using customer testing at two airports, Scandinavian Airlines is taking the next step in its evaluation of biometry for simplified check-in and embarkation. Biometry is the technology that can read a person's unique features, such as fingerprints, face or the iris of the eye.

As of the beginning of November, SAS frequent flyers at Umeå Airport will be able to test passing through a turnstile at the gate to the aircraft using their fingerprints. A few weeks later, a corresponding test will be started at another Scandinavian airport, where the eye will be scanned.

"We previously tested biometry internally using fingerprints, but scanning the iris is new for us," says Charlotte Rosengren-Edgren, head of Product Innovation at Scandinavian Airlines. "We are now testing two different ways to establish a flexible solution and to find out the customers' reaction."

The test, which will take six months, is being conducted using smart SAS cards, on which the travelers' fingerprints or iris images have been stored. At the gate, the card is read without requiring contact and then the passenger puts his finger on or puts his eye in front of a scanner. Identity is verified by a comparison of the fingerprint/iris and the card content.

"Simple, secure and quick for the passenger," continues Charlotte Rosengren-Edgren.

A smart card with stored features means that the passenger carries his own personal information. When a match is verified, SAS does not store the information, thereby resolving the issue of personal integrity.

The reason for these tests is that various authorities are expected to intensify their security requirements for airlines and airports, which can lead to additional checking of passengers and luggage.

"Our challenge is therefore to raise the security level, while also simplifying the travel process," says Charlotte Rosengren-Edgren. "Biometry offers us this possibility. Now we are going to test the technology in practice."

SAS has selected the Fyrplus company as supplier for this project.

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