CBP’s Facial Biometric Matching Service

U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) is changing the face of travel with its cloud-based facial biometric matching service that enables safe, secure and fast identity verification.

This matching service is envisioned to replace the need to manually check paper travel documents by providing an automated identity verification process everywhere a traveler shows their travel document across every step in the travel continuum.

**How Does It Work?**

Using APIS data, CBP creates a temporary gallery of photographs and unique identifiers (UIDs) for passengers on all departing and arriving U.S. flights. These photos and UIDs are securely pushed to a cloud-based matching service. CBP provides web services and a gateway for airlines and airports to submit traveler photos through an internet application program interface (API).

CBP’s facial biometric matching service has three primary functions:
1. **Authenticate** – validates security credentials and grants access to the system
2. **Identify** – receives photos from the airline’s system and identifies them
3. **Respond** – responds within two seconds or less with match results

Airports and airlines will be able to verify traveler identity using the facial biometric matching service throughout the travel process by simply capturing a live traveler photo. The captured photo is compared against the cloud-based matching service’s photo gallery in real-time. The service responds with identity verification match results, eliminating manual processing such as document checks or the use of boarding passes.
HOW IS TRAVELER INFORMATION SAFEGUARDED?
CBP’s facial biometric matching service is hosted in a secure cloud-based environment. No personal identifying information for travelers beyond the photo is stored in the cloud. Photos used for matching are immediately converted into a format that cannot be restored to their original state. As part of the ongoing exit program, once a traveler’s identity is confirmed, the traveler’s photograph is discarded after a period of 14 days.

CBP takes its obligations to privacy and the protection of traveler data extremely seriously. CBP has published numerous privacy impact assessments explaining all aspects of the program to the public. These assessments indicate exactly how the data is captured, stored, transferred, and for how long it is maintained. Tear sheets and signage are available at the boarding gates, which explain the facial recognition process and alternative inspection procedures.

WHAT PHOTO CAPTURE EQUIPMENT IS REQUIRED AT DEPARTURE GATES?
The facial biometric matching service is device-agnostic. This allows CBP airlines and airports flexibility when selecting cameras to capture traveler photos at the departure gate. CBP provides a technical guide and specifications to support the on-boarding process.

READY TO PARTNER?
Interested airlines and airport authorities should contact their CBP representative or email SimplifyTravel@cbp.dhs.gov. CBP will provide a technical guide and specifications for the photo capture solution. Working with CBP, airlines and airports complete the following steps to initiate testing and deployment:

1. Review CBP-provided technical specification outlining interface, camera and network requirements
2. Develop a concept of operations for integration with the airline Departure Control System (DCS)
3. Select camera equipment and vendor
4. Establish an implementation timeline with CBP

Help Change the Face of Travel Today
For more information on how to become a partner, email SimplifyTravel@cbp.dhs.gov