



# CWT traveler

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CURRENT NEWS AFFECTING TODAY'S BUSINESS TRAVELLER

## Travel Tips

### The new US Airways: new options and new processes for travelers

US Airways Group, Inc. finalized its merger September 27, enabling America West Airlines and US Airways to begin operating as one carrier under the US Airways brand. Positioned now as the nation's largest full-service, low-cost, low-fare airline and the fifth largest carrier overall, the new US Airways now trades on the New York Stock Exchange under the low-cost carrier (LCC) symbol. Features of the new US Airways will include:

- Routes to Europe, the Caribbean, Mexico, Canada, and soon, Hawaii.
- Hubs in Charlotte, North Carolina, Phoenix, and Philadelphia, with secondary hub/focus cities in Las Vegas, Pittsburgh, Boston, New York/LaGuardia and Washington/Ronal Reagan National Airport.
- Hourly shuttle service between Boston, New York, and Washington.
- A new Dividend Miles frequent flyer program—reciprocal frequent flyer benefits began October 5.
- First-class cabins on domestic and international flights, with advance seating assignments and in-flight amenities including audio and video entertainment.
- Participation in the Star Alliance, comprising 16 of the world's airlines. Star Alliance benefits will be phased in over the next six months.
- 17 US Airways Clubs, offering travelers personal assistance.

#### Airport check-in

During the initial phases of the merger, some cities will merge US Airways and America West facilities. The first of these changes occurred September 21 and was reported via *CWT Hot News*. Until the airline systems are merged behind the scenes, **travelers will need to check in with the carrier operating the first flight in their itinerary**. If America West operates the first flight, travelers should check in with America West at the lines marked "A" at the airport. If US Airways operates the first flight, travelers should check in with US Airways at the lines marked "B" at the airport. Thirty-eight of US Airways' more than 200 locations require this signage short-term.

In addition, US Airways travelers may find their return flight operates on a different carrier than their originating flight, so travelers should confirm. US Airways provides an [Airport Check-In page](#) on their Web site to assist travelers in determining where they should check-in.

#### Traveler tips

US Airways provides the following tips to ensure smooth travels:

- Travelers should continue to book US Airways and/or America West as they did before the merger. The airlines' Web sites and reservation systems will operate separately short term.
- Travelers can check their tickets to determine which airline operates their flight and they should check-in with that airline, even if flying from an airport served by both. Signage is expected to help direct travelers.

- Effective October 5, passengers on either US Airways or America West must check-in for their flight at least **30 minutes prior to departure**, even if not checking bags. In Atlanta, Denver, Las Vegas, Philadelphia, and Washington Dulles, travelers must check in at least **45 minutes** prior to departure. For flights to international destinations, travelers must check in at least **60 minutes** before departure
- Short term, travelers preferring to check-in online should use the Web site of the airline from which they purchased their ticket.
- Travelers should continue to use the self-service kiosks that match the airline from which they purchased tickets.
- Miles from both programs earned before and after the merger will be honored. For those with a membership in both programs, unused miles will be automatically combined in early 2006 under the new Dividend Miles program, including the consolidation of all frequent flyer features.

Travelers can expect additional updates as later phases of the merger, including code sharing, are implemented.

Sources: *US Airways, America West*

## International

### EU declares zero tolerance for unsafe airlines

In response to several fatal plane crashes over a five-week period this summer, the European Commission, the EU executive band, has aggressively pursued the creation of an EU-wide list of unsafe airlines. This list, referred to as the 'black list' for unsafe carriers, is expected to be released in 2006.

While France and Belgium have already published their lists, airline safety experts express concern due in part because criteria for inclusion on the list nor an explanation on how the airlines are evaluated has been disclosed.

#### International Air Transport Association

The International Air Transport Association (IATA) has what is considered a 'highly regarded program' called "Operational Safety Audit" that uses independent analysis to evaluate airlines. The audit, implemented in 2001, currently has 58 of the more than 250 carriers in the world noted as meeting the requirements. Each audit is valid for two years and then an airline must be re-examined. A current list is available at: [www.iata.org/iosa/registry](http://www.iata.org/iosa/registry)<sup>1</sup>.

Six companies, comprising mostly aviation consultants, are accredited auditors that critique airlines on items such as: cargo, aircraft cabins, mechanics, and management. According to IATA, an audit team of six experts spend five days completely the audit. If an issue is found, the airline has 12 month to correct and not until that is completed is the airline publicly identified as meeting the international audit standards.



#### Federal Aviation Administration

Instead of providing a list of airlines with current safety issues, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) provides a list of countries that, according to their standards, have not adequately managed their airlines to the standards set by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO). The list is available on the FAA's Website [Go here](#)<sup>4</sup>, and click on "Results". Under the FAA rankings, airlines either meet or do not meet the ICAO standards.

#### Verify before you fly

Industry and government experts all agree that prior to international travel on any airlines, travelers need to use the resources provided to carefully check safety records and accreditation.

Sources: *Associated Press, eTurboNews, The Wall Street Journal, Dow Jones Newswires*

## Current Events

### Hotels strive to reduce environmental impact

It comes as little surprise that hotels—and their guests—are significant contributors to global warming when you consider water and electricity usage adds up to \$4 billion a year in the U.S. alone.

Most business travelers are familiar with the cards placed on beds and in bathrooms informing guests how to reuse towels and bed linens. In addition, many hotels are extending efforts to other environmentally friendly practices in energy efficiency, water conservation, and reducing carbon dioxide gas emissions. Some specific practices include replacing inefficient light bulbs with newer high efficiency ones, employing eco-friendly cleaning products, and deploying recycling bins.

Hotel operators are learning that changing to more environment-friendly ways comes with some concrete economic benefits. Research by the International Hotels Environment Initiative found hotels that have not yet adopted environmental programs could save between 10 and 40% on energy bills, 25% on waste and 20% on water bills.

More hotels are tackling environmental issues before they are even built; using energy-efficient, locally sourced materials with internal spaces that require less heating or cooling. Further proof of this trend: a magazine devoted to the topic, *Green Hotelier* at: [www.greenhotelier.com](http://www.greenhotelier.com).

Sources: *CNN, Green Hotelier*

## TV goes live on overseas flights

Singapore Airlines recently introduced live television news and sports broadcasts onboard flights between Singapore and London, with other routes to follow soon. The airline is the first international carrier to offer live, uncensored newscasts and other entertainment.

Unlike domestic U.S. carrier JetBlue, which offers free television to all passengers, Singapore Airlines is bundling their service with its Connexion by Boeing Internet service. Singapore charges passengers \$29.95 for the Connexion service, and plans to deploy the connections to its main cabin by the end of the year.

Sources: CNN, People's Daily Online

## Winglets gliding back into the picture

Winglets, the fin-like wing tip pieces of metal added to aircraft wings, have been around the airline industry since the 1970s and are making yet another comeback at a time when their aerodynamic design can save fuel costs.

In-flight, the winglets increase aircraft lift and reduce drag, allowing for more gliding and thus, less fuel. AirTran Airways and Southwest Airlines are among the carriers planning winglet installation. The carriers have projected fuel consumption can be decreased by 5% on long flights. AirTran officials project an average savings of 90,000 gallons of fuel per year on each of its 737s.

Delta Air Lines is researching the installation of winglets for its full-size jets but because of installation downtime, two or three days, they may consider installation on new planes only. Southwest's come with them already installed.

Sources: The Atlanta Journal-Constitution, ATA SmartBrief, Air TransportBiz

## Travel Tips

### Instant purchase fares

It is no secret the airlines are under significant pressure to generate revenues, and simultaneously, competitive pressure to keep air fares low. These opposing pressures have forced the airlines to find new ways to increase revenues. The latest idea? Instant purchase fares.

Traditionally, only the [low-cost carriers](#) offered instant purchase fares, but of late, some major carriers have also begun to offer these fares in select markets.

What is an instant purchase fare? Just that, a discounted fare that must be purchased at the time the reservation is confirmed. A credit card is required to hold the seat and the fare.

The fare is non-refundable and can only be changed with applicable penalties/fees. Instant purchase fares cannot be held for any length of time. Self-booking systems will allow the user to put the reservation on hold, but the airline will cancel the reservation, generally within 24 hours, when the carrier's systems identify there is no ticket number in the reservation.

How does a traveler know if they are booking an instant purchase fare via their self-booking tool? An instant purchase message will display when this type of fare is selected, including a link to the fare rules. All rules and restrictions are detailed for each airline segment of the itinerary. It is important when self-booking to review the fare rules so any applicable restrictions are fully understood by the traveler.

Many corporate travel programs encourage travelers to book the lowest logical fare for the itinerary that best meets their business needs. As instant purchase fares are often the lowest option in a particular market and an attractive low-fare option; travelers should be aware these fares are restricted and fees apply for itinerary changes—a frequent occurrence with business trips. However, it is usually less expensive to book the restricted fares and pay the exchange fee than to book a fully refundable ticket at a much higher rate.

### Low cost carriers offering instant purchase fares:

Big Sky Airlines (GQ)  
 Calm Air (MO)  
 CanJet (C6)  
 Cape Air (9K)  
 Corporate Airlines (3C)  
 Great Lakes Aviation (ZK)  
 Hawaiian Air (HA)  
 Horizon Air (QX)  
 Independence Air (DH)  
 jetBlue (B6)  
 Mesa Airlines (YV)  
 Shuttle America Airlines (S5)  
 Southwest Airlines (WN)  
 Spirit Airlines (NK)  
 Sun Country (SY)  
 WestJet (WS)

Travelers will need to show their frequent flyer cards at check-in for these low-cost carriers as frequent flyer numbers are not systemically transmitted to the carriers via self-booking or agency reservation systems.

Source: CWT

## Negotiating weather-related travel delays

Weather-related delays have frustrated all frequent travelers at one time or another. While avoiding weather altogether is probably impossible, the below steps minimize the risk of these delays:

**Fly in the middle of the day.** Early morning fog and late afternoon thunderstorms increase the potential for delays at those times.

**Avoid connections.** Travelers chance an increase in delays with every stop along the way.

**Look at on time arrival percentages.** Airlines disclose the frequency of late arrivals for a flight, and while these delays are not always caused by weather, this is factored into that figure.

**Be aware of seasonal delays.** For example, Minneapolis or Chicago experience winter snow storms, just as Gulf States are likely to experience thunderstorms and tropical storms during the summer. .

**Sign up for flight notification when available.** Early warnings that a flight is delayed sent to a traveler's mobile phone or PDA allows travelers more options when trying to change flights.

**Have an alternate flight plan.** Being aware of alternate connections or routes can quickly allow travelers to change flight plans and avoid or mitigate weather delays.

For additional information, the Federal Aviation Association (FAA) and the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) maintain Websites that provide useful information to assist travelers.

Sources: USA TODAY, travel.about.com

## Supplier News

### Several foreign carriers simplify fares

Following the trend started by North American carriers, several foreign carriers, including Air New Zealand, Qantas, SAS and Lan Airlines, have announced simplified pricing structures.

Lan Airlines revamped its pricing structure into seven fare categories including first, business, business value, full flexible, flexible, economy and promotional. The airline also standardized many policies around reissues, date changes and refunds to further simplify the booking process.

SAS switched to a simplified fare structure for most of its European network. Tickets purchased at all points of sale are now one-way and no longer require Saturday-night stays. SAS service to Germany will transition to the new pricing design in January 2006. Pricing for flights to North America remains unchanged.

Meanwhile, Australia's Qantas Airways and Air New Zealand have also simplified their fare structure on routes to North America by reducing fare types and lowering change fees.

Sources: Business Travel News, CNN



## Singapore Airlines rolling out designer sleepwear

Singapore Airlines has introduced sleeper suits designed by French-based design house, Givenchy, as part of the carriers' service offered to first-class passengers at no additional charge. The suits, which can be worn both while in-flight and off the plane as sports gear, are given to qualifying passengers on-board the aircraft. Passengers have a choice of a suit in either light or dark grey which are available in four sizes: small, medium, large and extra large.

The suits are currently available on night flights to and from Shanghai and Beijing and all flights to and from London and Sydney. The airline will soon be introducing the suits on all long-haul flights.

Sources: Singapore Airlines, Business Travel Executive

## Amtrak increases service; postpones fare hike

### More service returns

Amtrak began operating near-hourly weekday service between Washington, D.C. and New York on September 19, increasing the current weekday service between New York-Washington by two roundtrips. Four roundtrips are now offered by Amtrak between Boston and New York. For more information on the schedules, view [Amtrak.com](http://Amtrak.com).

### Fare increase postponed

Amtrak postponed a previously announced fare increase, originally scheduled to begin on September 20. The increase, which included a \$3 and a \$4 increase along the Northeast Corridor, was announced in early September as part of its plan to combat rising fuel costs. No new date for the increase has been set; Amtrak is postponing any action until it concludes continued briefings with public officials and interested groups. The rail provider also plans to standardize its discounts on monthly Smart Passes.

Sources: Amtrak, The Wall Street Journal

## Regional

### Southwest Florida International Airport—built for a new era of air travel

Fort Myers' Southwest Florida International Airport welcomed travelers to its new Midfield Terminal which opened September 9. The \$438 million project was one of the first in the United States designed to incorporate the Transportation Security Administration's (TSA) post-September 11 security mandates.

Changes were made to the original design to accommodate an additional 27,000 square feet for security clearance areas, including enhanced passenger-screening checkpoints and a

state-of-the-art baggage-handling system. Another element of the terminal's design is its flexibility to manage a growing number of passengers. Currently, the 798,000 square-foot terminal comprises three concourses with 28 aircraft gates, while design plans include space for two additional concourses, and innovative T-shaped concourse extensions to provide a total of 65 gates.

The parking facility was also expanded, doubling the number of available parking spaces today and constructed so that two floors can be added to the three-story parking garage. Located directly across from the terminal, the facility also houses rental car facilities, eliminating the need for rental car shuttles.

The new terminal is host to 24 carriers and offers non-stop service to 31 U.S. airports.

Source: *Southwest Florida International Airport*

## International

### New passport standards implemented in United Kingdom

Effective September 12, all new United Kingdom passport applicants will need to follow updated requirements for international photograph standards. Designed to deter fraud, the change allows U.K. passports to be compatible with facial recognition technology. To comply, applicants must meet the following criteria:

- Photo background color must be off-white, cream, or light grey
- Applicant must be looking straight ahead with their mouth shut and have a 'neutral' expression
- Photo size must be 45mm by 35mm and printed on standard photographic paper
- Applicant must be the only individual in the photo and their head and shoulders must take up 65 to 75% of the frame

Applicants not meeting the requirements will be denied passport issuance until an alternate photograph is supplied. The requirements support the new biometric passports scheduled for issuance in early 2006. Travelers with current passports do not need to seek an upgrade until their current passport expires.

Sources: *BBC, ATA SmartBrief*

## Government/Legislation

### In-flight video surveillance proposed by FAA

The Federal Aviation Association (FAA) has proposed the installation of in-flight video surveillance technology in cabins of commercial aircraft.



If passed, all passenger aircraft would be outfitted with technology allowing the flight crew to visually monitor the space outside the cockpit door. In addition, the FAA outlined a process for flight attendants to quietly notify the flight crew of any suspicious activity or security breaches in the cabin.

The proposed changes address standards adopted by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) following September 11. These standards were offered by the ICAO, as well as the rapid-response team created by the Secretary of Transportation, the Aviation and Transportation Security, and Homeland Security before being passed by the U.S. Congress in November 2001.

The FAA has proposed a two-year period for the industry to evaluate the options presented and comply once the measures are passed. Public comment is being collected by the FAA through November 21 via:

1. DOT Docket Website: <http://dms.dot.gov>
2. Government-wide rulemaking Website: <http://www.regulations.gov>

Sources: *Business Travel News, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation*

## U.S. passport requirements to stick

As previously reported in *CWT Traveler*, the U.S. State Department and the Department of Homeland Security are moving forward with implementation of the new passport rule requiring travelers from allied nations to present a passport or other secure document before entering the U.S. Although the change has come under scrutiny from travelers and affected nations, the agencies plan to adopt the new policy by year-end.

However, the date when these changes would affect travelers has been pushed back a year. Under the revised timeline, air or sea travelers from Canada, Mexico, the Caribbean, Bermuda, and South and Central America will have to show appropriate documents beginning December 31, 2006. Travelers crossing land borders from Canada and Mexico will have to comply by December 31, 2007.

While implementing the change, Department officials say they will continue to look at options for a less expensive, more widely used alternative document to allow travelers access into the country through land borders.

It is estimated that only 7 million people who live just outside the U.S., in Canada and Mexico, have the appropriate documents to cross the border. In the U.S., only 20% of the population is said to have a passport.

Sources: *USA TODAY, Associated Press*

## Technology

### U.S. business travelers slow to adopt airport Wi-Fi

While airports and carriers continue making high-speed, wireless connections available to travelers, a recent study by Gartner, a global information technology research firm, shows only 25% of U.S. business travelers use these services in airports or in-flight.

Lack of education and financial considerations have been cited as reasons for not utilizing the service. Travelers are not sure what equipment is needed, how to connect, and how much it costs.

U.S. business travelers are not the only ones with low adoption; the percentage of Wi-Fi users in the U.K. is even lower, as an estimated 17% of business travelers use the service there. While both domestic and international carriers continue to install wireless Internet access in their aircraft, 78% of U.S. travelers and 75% of U.K. travelers polled say they would rather not be connected in-flight. Business travelers rank more personal space, larger baggage allowances, and enhanced entertainment ahead of Wi-Fi service.

Among the respondents using the service currently, they were happy with the speed of connection, ease of use, and overall value. They were least happy with the price of the service and the limited availability of 'hot spots' in some locations.

According to a Gartner analyst, because many corporations do not reimburse for Wi-Fi access charges and often these fees are not covered by traveler telecom contracts, Wi-Fi providers, airlines, and airports need to do a good job marketing the value of the service to business travelers and their organizations.

Sources: *Information Week, ATA SmartBrief*

### Battery running low? No problem

Business travelers know the importance of staying connected while traveling. Many carry more than one fixed or wireless device ranging from mobile phones, PDAs, and laptops; having enough battery power can be a concern. Reware's Juice Bag® may provide just the environmentally friendly solution needed.

An all-purpose, solar-powered daypack, the Juice Bag can charge most 12-volt electronic devices from anywhere in the world. The product requires approximately 6 hours of sunlight and uses a car charger adapter to convert sunlight into electricity. More information can be found at:

[www.rewarestore.com](http://www.rewarestore.com).

Sources: *CNN, Reware Store*

## Industry Trends/Innovations

### IRS increases 2005 mileage rate

In a rare move by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), a mid-year adjustment to the allowable mileage reimbursement rate was made for the remainder of 2005. The new rate, 48.5 cents, is an 8-cent-per-mile increase over the beginning of 2005. The IRS also broke precedent by waiting to announce mileage rates for next year, until closer to January. The IRS says the sharp increase in gas prices, caused by the effects of Hurricane Katrina, led to the mid-year rate increase. According to the American Automobile Association (AAA), today, a gallon of gas averages \$2.87 compared to \$2.41 one month ago and \$1.84 a year ago. A recent poll found 83% of surveyed expense managers use the IRS rate for mileage reimbursement.

Sources: *Business Travel News, Internal Revenue Service*