

DEMAND FOR SELF-SERVICE AT ABU DHABI INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT HIGHEST IN NEW SURVEY

ABU DHABI - 1 November, 2011 – Passengers at Abu Dhabi International Airport (AUH) have the highest demand for self-service options of all six major airport hubs included in this year's [SITA/Air Transport World Passenger Self-Service Survey](#), which also found high rates of smartphone adoption among premium travelers. It is the first time that AUH has featured in the survey.

The demand for self-service is partly fuelled by smartphone adoption rates of 78% for frequent flyers (over ten trips per year) and 35% among business/first class travelers. The survey reveals a clear opportunity for airlines to increase the use of mobile check-in, which had only been used by 12% of survey respondents compared to 38% who had used online check-in.

In AUH, 33% of the passengers surveyed had a smartphone and a further 50% had ordinary mobile phones. The Blackberry was the most popular with 41% of smartphone holders having one, followed by 26% having an iPhone. Globally, 35% of respondents preferred the iPhone compared to 28% who used the Blackberry.

The rising influence of the smartphone globally is a key finding from the 6th annual SITA/Air Transport World Passenger Self-Service Survey carried out with a representative sample of the 283.5 million passengers who pass through six of the world's leading airport hubs: Abu Dhabi International Airport, Beijing International Airport; Frankfurt International Airport; Hartsfield-Jackson, Atlanta; Mumbai International; and Sao Paulo Guarulhos.

Interest in mobile applications is high at AUH where 30% of respondents would be willing to pay for information updates sent directly to their mobile phones. Interest is highest in flight-related information such as gate changes, flight delays, and boarding status, which 80% of survey respondents would use if available. This is followed by wait time at security, 50%; time to reach departure gate, 42%; information on airport parking, 35%; and location of closest lounge, 33%.

And 73% of AUH smartphone users would access a free Wi-Fi network compared to 66% globally. At AUH 15% would be willing to pay for Wi-Fi access compared to 10% globally.

AUH passenger interest in self-service is underlined by the fact that it has the highest success rate in the survey when it comes to encouraging passengers to use remote bag-drop facilities, which was an option used by 13% of passengers with a bag to check-in compared with a rate of just 1% in the survey overall.

On the other hand, only 4% reported using a bag-drop counter compared to a global rate of 42%. A higher proportion of passengers had a bag to check-in than at any other airport in the survey, 81% compared to an overall survey rate of 67%.

The appetite for self-service options is high at AUH. Self-bag tag (81%), self-service bag drop (76%), and self-boarding (74%) were the three most popular self-service options sought by AUH survey respondents, followed by tracking of bag location from a mobile device (67%), transfer kiosks (63%), and reporting missing bag from kiosks (63%).

Retail travel agencies are still more popular with AUH travelers than elsewhere with 44% of respondents using them for bookings compared to 17% overall but, interestingly, the overwhelming majority, a massive 99% of those who choose to book their flights on-line did so through an airline website compared to the global survey figure of 52%.

There is a clear opportunity here for airlines to target AUH passengers with improved non-air offers on their websites as actual usage rates for modifying reservations on-line and purchasing other services are 32% or lower.

Hani El Assaad, SITA Regional Vice-President, Middle East and North Africa, said: "It is exciting to see Abu Dhabi International Airport feature in the Passenger Self-Service Survey for the first time and to be able to provide the airport and airlines with this unprecedented insight into the behaviors and attitudes of their customers. The survey reveals many opportunities to provide services to passengers which will generate revenue, increase efficiency and improve passenger satisfaction."

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Notes to Editors:

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