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German airport operator Fraport AG and global IT service provider NTT have announced that they are planning to install Europe's largest private 5G campus network at Frankfurt Airport (FRA). The private 5G network will provide Fraport with an environment in which it can control data and voice communication autonomously. Thanks to the network's high bandwidth and low latency, Fraport will be able to accelerate innovative projects, such as autonomous driving on the apron. The 5G network also enables real-time data transfer. This may be necessary for future applications such as video-based monitoring of airport facilities via robots or drones. Dr Wolfgang Standhaft, chief information officer at Fraport, said: "Operating a standalone mobile network is a milestone for us as an airport operator. We are laying the strategic foundations that will help us make airport operations even more efficient in the future thanks to innovation and digitalisation." Kai Grunwitz, country managing director for Germany at NTT, said: "5G is undoubtedly one of the most important technologies, if not the most important, when it comes to enabling innovative digitalisation projects with the highest standards of speed and reliability. Building on our expertise in data networking, connectivity and security, NTT intends to play a pioneering role in establishing these networks."

Work on building the 5G network infrastructure at FRA is expected to begin in Q3 2022. The two project partners will start testing the new technology in a selected area of the airport. At the same time, they will evaluate the first use cases in the areas of automation, robotics, sensors, localisation, and communication. From 2023 onward, the network infrastructure will be gradually expanded across the entire airport premises covering more than 20 km². Fraport's other partner companies at FRA will then also be able to obtain access to the 5G campus network.

Accenture Federal Services (AFS), a subsidiary of Accenture, has been awarded a 10-year, USD 199 million contract from the US Department of Homeland Security, Transportation Security Administration (TSA), to provide a wide range of IT services in support of TSA's Secure Flight System. Secure Flight is a risk-based, prescreening program that enhances security by matching passenger names against trusted traveller lists and government watchlists. "TSA's Secure Flight system identifies low and high-risk passengers before they arrive at the airport. It does this by synching up watchlist and intelligence information against traveller information and passenger reservation data," said Maurine Fanguy, AFS managing director and DHS lead. "AFS will enhance the system by incorporating emerging technologies, including artificial intelligence and machine learning, into this mission-critical programme," she added.

Under the Secure Flight Systems IT Services contract, which runs for one base and nine option years, AFS will provide IT services to engineer, test, and sustain the Secure Flight system. Ultimately the goal is to transition the passenger screening system from its current architecture to open-source technologies to reduce operating costs for the program while enhancing security and maintaining its commitment to passenger privacy rights.

With passengers eager to return to travel and make up for a lost time because of Covid restrictions, airports, airlines, and aviation support organisations are faced with severe employee shortages. Such shortage at airports around the world has resulted in frequent flight delays, cancellations, and lots of frustration for travellers. With the limited number of available staff, companies turn to digital solutions to minimise the impact, maximise efficiency, and ensure stable operations. "As we observe drastic staffing shortages, the usability and efficiency of each person must be pushed to the max," commented Romas Butkevicius, CEO of Sensus Aero, a new-gen software solution for the aviation industry.

"One important thing to remember – if you are extremely understaffed, the software won't find you any new employees. However, digital solutions can aid you in the management of the staff you do have. For example, one solution can find better ways to schedule needed staff thus saving on required personnel per period. Needing even 10 fewer people to cover the period while maintaining the same quality of service, can save massive costs on salary alone in the long run. While aviation companies struggle to find needed staff, utilising efficiently current staffing is a must."

According to him, using scheduling tools can also save from human errors. "Before managing any real-time ground handling operations, one must have a good plan. That's why planners are a valuable asset to the business and the schedule they design plays a vital part. Yet, they are human and make mistakes. Having reliable software can aid in avoiding many threats. And while such systems are not fully replacements for actual planners, they can be a real help in finding the best solutions."

Sensus Aero's CEO explains that the tool is able to generate rosters for both, perfect, meaning what is your needed demand with specific qualifications, and for unfulfilled plan situations when the system generates the roster with resources the company currently possess. "The latter mode is harder, as the system, not the planner, has to take in mind all unique situations and automatically assign tasks equally throughout the period. More to that, our solution utilises AI, which kicks in after 2-3 months of planning and learns the patterns of planner manual changes," he said.

ADB SAFEGATE recently announced the launch of CORTEX SAFE-r, its newest Runway Status Lights (RWSL) solution. After participating in the successful, multi-year RWSL project initiated by the US FAA in 2008, ADB SAFEGATE has started a new era for RWSL technology with CORTEX SAFE-r, which combines the RWSL logic with the RWSL Field Lighting System (FLS). CORTEX SAFE-r is an entirely independent system that offers immediate and reliable light activation when used with the latest ADB SAFEGATE LINC 360 technology. This integrated approach reduces light activation time and allows ADB SAFEGATE to fully control system performance. ADB SAFEGATE said that the new RWSL solution provides additional safety, above the standard clearances, stop bar activation and A-SMGCS safety nets while simultaneously reducing intervention time. The solution is scalable and can be tailored based on airport operations and airport hot spots.

CORTEX SAFE-r is a fully automated safety system based on red lights embedded in the pavement of runways and runway-taxiway intersections. These lights automatically warn pilots and vehicle operators if it is unsafe to cross, enter or begin a take-off on a runway. The lights provide direct, instant alerts to the taxiing aircraft crew, require no input from controllers and do not interfere with airport operations.

Netherlands-based firms SACO Airport Equipment and S-P-S International have reached an agreement regarding the acquisition of SPS Master Equipment and SPS Viking by SACO Airport Equipment. This strategic acquisition will allow further growth of the companies so increasing innovation and product development for the international market. The parties involved will continue to focus on their core competencies. With the consolidation of VIKING based in the UK and MASTER Airport Equipment based in the Netherlands, SACO continues to grow as a leading international supplier of air cargo handling systems. S-P-S has a good reputation in Europe in the field of sales, leasing, and maintenance of airport ground support equipment (GSE) and maintenance of Cargo Handling Systems (CHS).

Biometric recognition management company Vision-Box has unveiled its Seamless Assistant security gateway device, designed for more efficient passenger processing. This flexible, standalone mobile device is built with a small form factor; it is on wheels and can be used in different scenarios. With a reduced footprint, the Seamless Assistant enables biometric identification with liveness detection and fast deployment in various locations thanks to its battery-powered capability and mobile wi-fi connection.

The Seamless Assistant features intelligent light compensation, so it can adjust automatically to darker environments for better face capture. Its intelligent face-matching and liveness detection of the passenger is integrated with Vision-Box's Orchestra Digital Identity Management Platform, which is fully certified by Privacy by Design, to deliver a unique biometric user registration and management experience. Seamless Assistant has been developed to provide an exceptional user experience through its biometric and biographic capture performance, replacing manual and paper-based processes. The device has been designed to increase passenger throughput.

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