

### **AIDC - What does this term mean?**

Automatic Identification and Data Capture (AIDC) is the worldwide industry term which describes the identification and/or direct collection of data into a computer system, programmable logic controller (PLC), or other microprocessor-controlled device without using a keyboard. At their core, all AIDC technologies support two common goals: to eliminate errors associated with identification and/or data collection and to accelerate the through-put process. As an industry family, AIDC covers six distinct groups of technologies and services. They are: Card Technologies, Data Communications Technologies, Bar Code Technologies, Radio Frequency Identification Technologies, Emerging Technologies, and the Support and Supplies which serve the industry. As an enabling family of business and manufacturing technologies, AIDC takes on another, more universal profile.

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### **Chips to improve baggage-check efficiency**

By Chris Woodyard, USA TODAY

Radio waves and microchips will be at the heart of a revolutionary baggage security system soon to be used at San Francisco International Airport. When the system is introduced next month, the airport is expected to be the world's largest to use it. "It's an application of a type of system into an aviation environment that I don't think anyone else has tried," says Mark Denari, the airport's security program director. "I'm incredibly excited." The system aims to provide a better way of screening more luggage considered a higher security risk than other pieces.

The Federal Aviation Administration has a computer program in place to clue airport gate agents which bags should be checked for bombs or contraband. But the process can be cumbersome. Sometimes passengers and their bags are led off to special screening areas. Or the bags are put on a conveyor belt and have to be hand-sorted or scanned to identify the ones for special screening. San Francisco will use radio waves instead in what it hopes will be a foolproof, seamless system to check luggage without causing delay-inducing bottlenecks.

How it works: Ticket agents who identify certain bags for enhanced screening will attach a 2-inch-by-2.5-inch label on the bag tag. The label contains a microchip and an antenna. The bags then are placed on the conveyor belt with all other checked luggage. As the bags make their way to the planes, an electronic reader scans the labels as they pass by on the belt. Specially tagged bags are automatically diverted onto another conveyor belt that takes them to sophisticated bomb-detecting X-ray machines. The bags then pass through those machines, which can detect even plastic explosives. The company that makes the radio-wave tags says they can be read at greater distances and with more accuracy than conventional bar-code luggage tags.

"It improves efficiency," says Frank Binzoni, vice president of San Diego-based SCS, which makes the systems. "It means (airlines) will get more on-time arrivals and improve safety levels, because they will get those bags properly screened." The system will serve 24 airlines in San Francisco's new international terminal, which is tentatively scheduled to open Dec. 10 after several delays.

Northwest Airlines has tested the system for the past year at Seattle-Tacoma International Airport. In addition, a similar system that isn't as automated has been in use at London's Heathrow airport, Denari says. He says he expects 99% accuracy with the new system. If the system were put into wide use, it could help solve a problem that airports have faced in combating terrorism. The problem is that bomb-detection machines are expensive — upwards of \$1 million each — and there aren't enough of them to screen all checked baggage without making flight delays worse. The challenge has been to find a way to screen the highest-priority bags.

With the new system, San Francisco is "10 years ahead of the game," Denari says.