Common Use Passenger Processing Systems (CUPPS)
Frequently Asked Questions

General questions about the CUPPS standard

How did the CUPPS initiative get started?

CUPPS grew out of the Seattle Summit, held in 2003, with the aim of finding common ground where airports and airlines could cooperate to enhance efficiency and achieve financial savings. These stakeholders concluded that the air transport industry could not continue to support multiple vendor-specific implementations of different common use environments. Following an initial review of CUTE RP1797, IATA and ATA's Joint Passenger Services Conference (representatives of the world's air carriers) instructed the stakeholders, through the auspices of the IATA CUSS Management Group, to establish a sub-group to address Common Use standards, thus, in 2004, the CUPPS initiative was born. The JPSC was advised on CUPPS progress annually.

What are the benefits of a common use standard to the air transport industry?

A Recommended Practice with the associated technical standard for common use environments simplifies the business of common use for the entire air transport industry.

The CUPPS standard brings the following benefits to airlines:

- Allows Airlines to have a single CUPPS application that will work as expected on CUPPS-Certified platforms implemented by any common use supplier.
- Airlines with CUPPS-Certified applications can be confident that those applications can be deployed to any CUPPS airport without vendor-specific modifications.
- Airlines can be confident that they will be able to provide the same customer services and agent functions at any airport with a CUPPS-Certified platform.

The CUPPS standard brings the following benefits to airports:

- Allow airports to introduce a common use environment to their location for the first time with less impact to their airlines.
- Allow airports to transition between suppliers of CUPPS-Certified platforms with little or no impact to their airlines.
- By commoditizing the common use product, airports should receive more competitive responses to their requests for proposals. This should reduce the cost of common use environments to airports – a savings that should be passed on to their tenant airlines.

The CUPPS standard brings the following benefits to vendors:

- Provides the framework to develop a global solution based on industry standards
- Opens the global common use market to all interested participants on the same basis

- Homogenise the global market in terms of a single standard to be applied
- All IATA & ATA Member airlines have voted CUPPS as the single global standard

I can deploy a cheap, non-standard common use, so why should I consider CUPPS?

There are other solutions available in the marketplace that may, on a first consideration, appear attractive to the common use provider, typically an airport. However, in all such circumstances, the purchase price is not the sole consideration for such an investment and effectively results in a proprietary solution, something that goes against the ethos of common use. The needs and benefits for standardisation have been detailed above.

How flexible is the CUPPS standard?

The CUPPS standard allows the adoption of new technology, such as advances in IT infrastructure or architecture, peripherals, or business functionality.

IT Infrastructure or Architecture: CUPPS is based on a standard Windows platform and utilizes standard networking technology. There is nothing that is proprietary in nature, nor overly difficult from a programming or deployment standpoint.

Peripherals: The CUPPS standard supports the selection of peripherals from a variety of hardware manufacturers, rather that prescribing a single-source or "short-list" of options. For further details of commercial off-the-shelf technologies see the section on COTS below.

Business Process: The future of passenger processing continues to change, with the focus on self-managed travel by the passenger and new services and products available to the passenger. To ensure the industry delivers suitable tools and processes common use need to evolve to provide the necessary support.

Will the CUPPS standard allow airlines, airports, and common use suppliers to be innovative?

Yes. The CUPPS standard is built around the notion of flexibility and scalability to allow airlines, airports, and common use suppliers to be early adopters of new technologies and business processes as meets their business needs.

Why do IATA, ATA and ACI support the CUPPS standard?

The member airlines of IATA and ATA requested their organisations to review CUTE and develop CUPPS to improve common use environments and voted to approve the CUPPS Recommended Practice.

The member airports of ACI voted to approve the CUPPS Recommended Practice. ACI supports the CUPPS standard at the request of its member airports.

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Note: CUPPS is a recommended practice and thus is simply recommended by IATA/ATA/ACI as the standards for deploying common use. This does not preclude other solutions in the marketplace.

Is an IATA Recommended Practice mandatory on the airline industry?

IATA Standards come in two specific kinds; Resolutions and Recommended Practices. An IATA Resolution is adopted under conditions of unanimity. Abstentions or failure to vote are deemed to be affirmative. An IATA Resolution is binding on all IATA Airline Members unless it contravenes a law or regulation or official policy of its home country. A Recommended Practice is adopted by majority of two-thirds of the Airline Members present and voting. IATA Recommended Practices are for the guidance of Airline Members and are not binding on them.

The CUPPS Standard is a Recommended Practice RP1797

Is an ACI Recommended Practice mandatory on the airport industry?

ACI Recommended Practices and Technical Standards are considered to be the most efficient and effective way of accomplishing a task, process or activity based on specifications and repeatable procedures that have proven themselves over time for ACI airport members and industry stakeholders. .

ACI Recommended Practices and Technical Standards are approved following a two step review process, including the review by a specific committee or ACI working group, and a 2 month period for comments from the whole ACI membership.

After the review process has been completed, the RP as well as any significant comments received from ACI members are presented to the ACI Executive Committee and World Governing Board for approval.

ACI Recommended Practices are for the guidance of Airport Members and are not binding on them.

The CUPPS Technical Standard is ACI Recommended Practice 500A07

The CUPPS Technical Standard is the first ACI-ATA-IATA joint Recommended Practice.

Finances

How will the CUPPS standard impact the air transport industry's bottom line?

IATA undertook an extensive business case to quantify the cost-benefit of implementing CUPPS over allowing platform-specific common use solutions to proliferate. The IATA business case was based on input from airlines, airports, and common use vendors. This business case shows a significant savings to the air transport industry. In addition to the numbers gathered, there are avoidance costs of additional proprietary common use vendors not using the CUPPS standard.

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Airline Savings	US$ 75m
Airport Savings (top 200 airports)	US$ 65m
Total Industry Savings per annum	US$ 140m
5 Year Amortization for Airport upgrades	US$ 25m
Net Business Case Year 1	**US$ 115m**

The IATA business case recognizes that there is expense involved to transition to CUPPS solutions. However, the business case also very clearly illustrates that this short-term expense is compensated by mid- and long-term savings.

Can airlines of all sizes afford CUPPS?

Implementing and maintaining a single CUPPS application rather than multiple vendor-specific CUTE applications will be significantly less expensive for airlines of all sizes. Airlines – large and small – cannot afford for the number of non-standard CUTE solutions to continue to rise.

Can CUPPS reduce the cost for airlines to enter a new market / route?

All airlines benefit from ease of entrance at an airport with a CUPPS-Certified environment. Airlines of all sizes can begin service to a new airport with a CUPPS-Certified platform and be confident that their CUPPS applications will work as expected without vendor-specific modifications.

The CUPPS Technical Specification has a list of Required, Defined devices. Will this make airport-supplier contracts for common use environments more expensive or more complex?

The CUPPS standard recognizes that each contractual agreement for a CUPPS-Certified product will be unique according to the needs of the airport and its tenant airlines. The CUPPS standard does not compel an airport to refresh hardware outside the time frame specified in the airport-supplier contract. The concept of Required, Defined devices was born out of the desire of CUPPS to remain relevant in the world of fast changing business processes and supporting technology. This is a key element of the strategy to support such change quickly, efficiently and remain cost effective.

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CUPPS and Airline Business Processes

Will the CUPPS standard allow airlines to utilise any functionality that they want or require?

The CUPPS standard allows airlines to implement any operational, commercial, or customer services business processes that they require. The CUPPS standard was designed to foster consistency across all of an airline's airports, a vital component of a global business. A series of proprietary solutions do not support this global perspective.

The CUPPS standard has been designed specifically not to limit the functionality or the business processes that an airline may implement within their CUPPS applications. Airlines may implement any and all business processes in CUPPS that they require.

Does the CUPPS standard allow airlines to collect ancillary revenue such as baggage fees and seat upgrades?

Yes. The CUPPS standard supports an airline's ability to collect fares and fees and to sell ancillary goods and services.

Does the CUPPS standard support technical solutions to enable workforce mobility, such as tablet computers?

CUPPS platforms and applications could be used on tablet computers or any other hardware solutions that enable workforce mobility, even though CUTE has been traditionally associated with workstations at the ticketing and check-in counter, departure gate, and back office.

CUPPS and the Marketplace

Will CUPPS foster competition between common use suppliers?

Yes. Moving from individual proprietary solutions to a global standard drives competition in the market for common use solutions. CUPPS has been developed to provide that platform to support an increase in competition between common use suppliers.

Is CUPPS ready to be used in a live airport operation?

Yes. There are multiple CUPPS platforms that have been certified and are available for installation. Following the pilots programme in 2009, these platforms continue to be used by airlines as part of their day-to-day operation with overwhelming success. A number of airports are now planning full-scale CUPPS installations in 2011.

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Airline Applications

Will airlines really be able to use one application on all CUPPS-Certified platforms without modifications?

Yes. The airlines that took part in the pilots programme validated the ability to move their application from one CUPPS site to another without any vendor-specific modifications.

Can airlines use browser-based/web applications in CUPPS?

Yes. Airlines can use any application architecture that they feel best suites their users and their business needs. This includes browser-based/web applications.

Will airlines need to use applications provided by a third party in the CUPPS environment?

 The CUPPS standard has been designed for total flexibility and so allows an airline to implement their applications in the manner that best suits their technical and business needs. An airline may develop its own application internally, commission an application from a third party, license an existing product from a third party, or any combination of the above.

Certification

Why is Certification required for CUPPS platforms and applications?

Certification for CUPPS platforms is the process by which adherence to the CUPPS standard is ensured and protects all airlines operating in a common use environment against any unforeseen problems. This addresses a key short-coming in the CUSS model of self-certification, whereby the adherence to the standard was self-declared by each supplier and therefore true portability was never achieved. Adherence to the standard is what ensures portability, which in turn is what enables the cost savings clearly documented by IATA in the CUPPS business case. This is one of the cornerstones of the CUPPS standard and not available in proprietary solutions.

CUPPS and COTS Products

Does CUPPS only support industry-specific AEA printing?

The CUPPS standard supports printing via both the general-purpose Windows interface and the AEA industry-specific interface. The CUPPS standard supports both COTS* and AEA-specific printers in order to provide a smooth transition for airlines that may be on different technology timelines.

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Does CUPPS support Commercial off-the-shelf (*COTS) hardware that provides cost-effective solutions for common use environments?

Peripherals deployed in common use have changed dramatically over the last number of years driven largely with the move from ATB documents to plain paper equivalents as part of the IATA StB programme (BCBP specifically). However, commercial off-the-shelf hardware for airport operations should not be confused with products designed for home use. Airport operational products are designed for a 24/7 operation, home printers are not. The reduction in the costs of printers from ATB to plain paper has reduced the hardware costs by as much as 75% cheaper in real terms.

CUPPS and Virtualization

Does the CUPPS standard allow common use vendors, airports and airlines to use virtualization?

Yes. A CUPPS-Certified platform can be implemented at an airport using virtualized servers or virtualized desktops.

However, the use of virtualization in a common use environment does not negate the need for a common use standard. A virtualized non-standard common use environment is still a non-standard common use environment. Airlines will need to integrate their applications with any virtualized non-standard common use environment, incurring both manpower and travel expenses.

Is CUPPS merely an emulator, which is out-dated technology?

CUPPS is a comprehensive standard, not an emulator. An emulator hides differences in disparate systems whereas a standard requires similarities in systems.

CUPPS is an Application Program Interface (API) and a set of functional requirements for devices (such as the workstation, peripherals, etc.).

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Further information on CUPPS

Where can I get more information on CUPPS?

The CUPPS documentation is available to airlines, airports and vendor partners* from the IATA Web site at http://www.iata.org/workgroups/Pages/pemg.aspx

To get involved with CUPPS airlines, airports and members of the IATA Strategic Partnership programme can join the IATA Common Use Working Group (CUWG) at http://www.iata.org/workgroups/Pages/cuwg.aspx

To join the working group* please register at http://www2.iata.org/registration/getemailpage.aspx?siteurl=pemg

(* Please note, vendor partners must be members of the IATA Strategic Partnership programme in the area of PEMG or Common Use – for further details, please contact partnerships@iata.org

www.cupps.aero

Information for airports on www.aci.aero