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"The Face of the Airport" – Passenger Information Boards
How ANA and Toshiba's collaboration made Haneda an even better airport

Key points

- Better visibility of the boards thanks to applied ergonomics
- Usefulness for both the passengers and airport staff
- How good teamwork enabled two companies to work together

Over 74 million passengers visit Tokyo Haneda Airport every year. The airport's international terminal was the first airport terminal in Japan to receive the coveted "5-Star Airport" rating from Britain's SKYTRAX, the airline and airport service research and rating organization, in "Global Airport Ranking 2014". In March 2015 Haneda was again a star, when it SKYTRAX made in No. 1 in the "World's Best Domestic Airports". The prize puts the spotlight on airport accessibility and "usability" for the travellers, and it was the third consecutive win for Haneda.

In 2015 All Nippon Airways (ANA) developed new boarding procedures called "ANA Fast Travel". **The core of the project was a complete renewal of the information board system to make the passengers journey from arrival at the airport to boarding flights much easier and faster.** The system introduced is "Canary", the Comfortable ANA's Navigation Machinery, developed by Toshiba.

'Canary' has already been successfully introduced in 34 of 50 airports managed by ANA. Information is offered in four languages: Japanese, English, Chinese and Korean. **The screens are much more visible than those they replaced, and this has improved the passengers experience and satisfaction at the airports.**

The airport information board displays content in Japanese, English, Chinese and Korean.

The boards at the airport entrance direct passengers to their correct check in locations.

How did the idea of changing the "face of the airport" come to life and what were the tasks that had to be carried out? Six months on from the installation, we gathered the team members from ANA and Toshiba at the airport and asked them to reflect on the project. Here is a summary of the discussions:

- Main idea behind the project: how to make the boarding faster and easier for the passengers. The former system turned out to be insufficient for passenger requirements.

- Toshiba Design Centre was responsible for the new UXD (User Experience Design) approach which took into consideration the visibility and ergonomics of the displays. The Toshiba team conducted research at the airport, "acting" as passengers to see for themselves how they should improve the experience from the passenger perspective.

- The new design of the interface and use of four languages was done in preparation for Tokyo Olympics and the significant increase in passengers during the build-up to 2020.

- Toshiba also implemented cloud storage, connectivity and an easy-to-use browser interface for the airport staff, who have to work fast and support passengers.

- The introduction of the Canary system only took only a year. Implementing previous solutions had always taken around two years.

- The ANA team was especially happy with the mock-up of the board for the system prototype very early in the planning stage, as it stimulated ideas for the finished product.

- Both companies look forward for further collaborations. ANA predicts that future systems will be built on cloud computing and big data; the Toshiba people would like to see push messaging to smartphones and tablets that passengers carry with them.

- Toshiba and ANA have worked together since the mid-80s and a good working relationship made possible a successful project.

Both teams together: Toshiba (on the left) and ANA (on the right)