



AIRPORT ANXIETY

Brisbane International Airport

UX Research | June 2022

Mayu Nanaumi



The Project

"Why are passengers so stressed out at the Airport?"

The pandemic made the travel industry completely shut down for a long period. Fortunately, now we're slightly getting back to normal operation with an increased number of flights and destinations.

International travellers have never been happier and more excited about getting out of the country to continue their never-ending adventures and journey to their families.

Behind the excitement, what we call "Airport Anxiety" seems to remain in passengers that could often trigger negative experience at the Airports.



About myself



Mayu Nanaumi



UX /PX Researcher



Brisbane
International Airport

Coming into 4 years of work experience as an Aviation Protection Officer at the Brisbane International Airport, I decided to take my case study further by utilizing the research skills and experience to dive deeper into passenger experience.

Outside of the Airport, I work for non-profit organization as a UX Designer, participating in the crucial projects to improve the existing online platform to design a streamlined integration with its audience.

When I'm not online, you will find me at a local sushi train or ramen shop to fuel me up! If it's raining, then I will be on my couch + Netflix catching up on K drama series ...

RESEARCH PLAN

INVESTIGATE



Conducted **In-Depth Interview, Industry Research, Competitor Analysis, Daily Study, SNS Data Analysis**

DEFINE



Analyzed and synthesized the data collected from the research in order to define the passenger's journey that identifies pain-points

SOLUTION



Coming into the solution with the combination of digital & physical experience to support the Airport staff in a fast-paced and hectic environment.





RESEARCH GOAL

Study human factors and behaviours in different contexts, conditions and situations to identify the problem in emotional and physical life among international travellers.



Passengers

What they worry about

Who don't often travel

"I don't remember where I'm supposed to start from when I arrive at the airport. Because I don't come here often, it feels like I have never been here before"

Who is mum with baby/small kids

"It's not easy to travel with baby/kids when there's no one I can rely on to. I'm concerned about security screening because each airport has its own rule about restricted items and I really hope I won't lose baby foods that I packed for the flight"

Who are between the age of 60 to 80

"Last time we were exhausted about the whole process. From queuing at check-in to passing through customs control, it's only getting harder when it comes to our age"

Who have disability

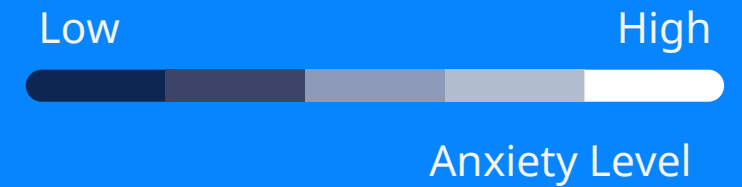
"My son has a hidden disability and he easily gets irritated in different activities and environments. Our biggest challenge will be the security screening & customs because we just never had any good experience with them"

Who don't speak in English

"In a high volume of people, I feel more embarrassed not being able to understand English. My biggest fear is security screening because last time I was yelled at by the officer" - Chinese passenger
"I've already seen a hundred of signs & instructions here at the airport which confuse me even more" - Korean passenger

KEY PASSENGERS

Here are the key passengers who are considered to be an greatly experienced "Airport Anxiety"



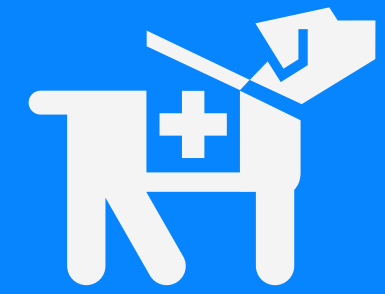
Non-frequent flyer



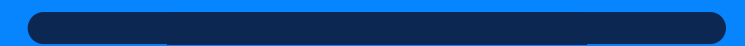
Parents with baby/small kids



Elderly



Medical conditioned



Non-English Speaker



Kids travelling alone



Disability



Passengers in Transit





RESEARCH INSIGHTS

Passenger Experience Research





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WHAT IS AIRPORT ANXIETY ?

"Airport anxiety can be regarded as a form of social anxiety.

The sum of all the components related to an airport that causes stress in you, in a way that affects your well-being and actions, can be considered airport anxiety. Having to spend a lot of time at airports before a flight can be seriously stressful"



airporttransfer.com





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THE BIGGEST FEAS

Massive, Fast-paced, Hectic

Missing flights wasn't the only fear passengers are dealing with at the airport. All anxiety comes in different situations, conditions, contexts and previous experiences.

In general, there are not many people who regularly come to the same airport - maybe once or twice a year

It's such an overwhelming experience for those who have less experience in air travel, walk into a massive place like the airport which is most likely packed with thousands of people & directions /signs.

Psychological Factor

When you walk into a completely different environment, the human brain needs a moment to catch up on what's happening in the surrounding and register the information according to your needs.





PASSENGER'S STORIES



Mother with baby, small kids

"It's a real mission to travel with my baby and kids. I can't take my eyes off them. I also have to make sure they're entertained and happy the whole time"



Medical Condition

"I have to carry my special diet meals due to my medical condition. When going through the security, I know for sure that my bags are always get rejected for further inspection because of the food I carry"



Hidden Disability

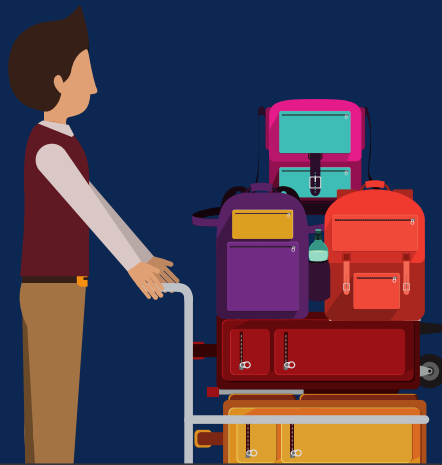
"My son has a hidden disability and he overly reacts when he is in an environment he's not used to. There are a lot of instructions in the departure process, people expect my son to comply like a normal person."



Non-English Speaker

"I've experienced being yelled at by a security officer at checkpoint because I didn't understand what he was saying. That became traumatic experience and I'm afraid of travelling to English-speaking countries."

The Departure Process for the International flight



Check in / Baggage Drop

Get your boarding pass issued



Security Screening

Liquids restrictions apply



Passport Control

Self passport scanner
OR
Manually processed by ABF Officers



Boarding

Have a safe flight !





PAIN POINTS

CHECK-IN /BAGGAGE DROP

- **Long waiting**
- A lot of direction signs & instructions no one sees
- Finding out check-in baggage is overweight or/Having to pay extra for excess
- Elderly tend to struggle with online check-in and baggage drop-off self-services
- Additional documents required - depends on destinations (eg. Vaccination status)

SECURITY SCREENING

- **Long waiting**
- Face-paced and noisy, only visual instructions are the aids to prepare for security screening
- Each airport has its own rule regarding the restriction /permitted items in carry-on
- Divest your personal items if required in order to be screened
- It could take long time for those who require special assistance

PASSPORT CONTROL

- **Long waiting**
- Primarily, a self passport-scanner in use, could delay due to individual capability
- If manually processed by ABF officers, passengers may be asked a few questions
- Not all passport are compatible for an electric scanner
- It can be difficult for some children to scan themselves through



STAFF SHORTAGES CRICIS IN POST PANDEMIC

In March 2020, Brisbane Airport Cooperation had to make a major change in operation for all services/contractors, mainly cutting down costs on non-essentials which resulted in laying off or making redundancy to the Airport staff.

When the Vaccine Mandatory was imposed on all airport workers, the staff number was largely dropped and most of them never returned to the Airport.

Since the Queensland border officially opened in January 2022, most airlines immediately resumed its operations and offered travel packages & deals to encourage people to travel overseas.

The number of passengers is increasing rapidly while airport workers are struggling to assist passengers due to staff shortages.



AVERAGE DAILY INTERNATIONAL FLIGHT MOVEMENTS

110 (FY19)



90 (FY20)



INTERNATIONAL PASSENGERS

6,196

(FY19)



4,661

(FY20)



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SOME AIRPORTS PERFORM DIFFERENTLY

Helsinki Airport

Helsinki, Finland

Helsinki Airport and 19 regional airports across Finland are looking to digitally transform with "**Amadeus**" - Cloud base airport operational database solution (AODB). The AODB solution is closely integrated with airline systems, enabling the airports to receive real-time updates about flights.

This timely information will allow airport stakeholders to allocate resources more effectively and better meet the requirements of travellers and carriers.

Cincinnati Airport

Kentucky, USA

Cincinnati Airport in the US has a new **robotic** team member providing passengers with a delivery service for food and retail products.

The introduction of these robots allows passengers waiting at the airport to order food, beverages, and lifestyle products without the need to walk around the airport and queue at various retailers.

Specific QR codes are placed at the lounges and terminal for passengers to access a web ordering option, allowing them to select items and products from a food and retail menu to be delivered to their boarding gate.






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PROBLEM STATEMENT

Passengers are frustrated about not receiving the information and services they need while dealing with their situations and conditions, which could increase their anxiety and stress levels.

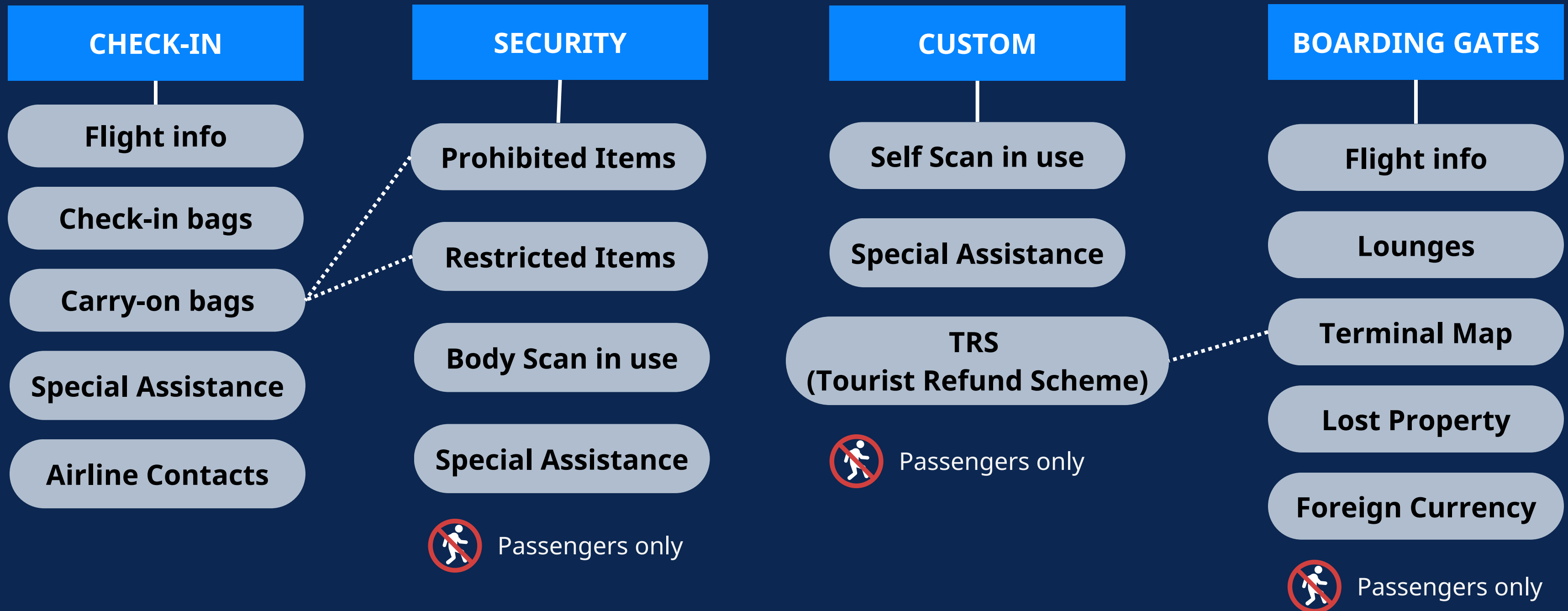
Airport staff are struggling to provide quality services and supports for passengers due to the staff shortage as an ongoing issue.

PASSENGER PERSONAS

NAME	Non-English Speaker 	Elderly 	Kids travelling alone 
GOALS	Simply worded directions /instructions and visual signs could help non-English speakers to understand information easier and faster.	Allocate the dedicated line for the elderly, medical conditions /special assistance to reduce the stress in queuing.	Allow a family member to escort their kids to help them get through the screening process and passport control.
MOTIVATIONS	Simple brief directions /signs feel more inclusive to all passengers and reduce the chance of having anxiety during the departure process.	Allocation of the dedicated line for the elderly, medical conditions/special assistance would make them feel more comfortable without having to rush the procedure.	The solution would give young children a relief, especially when they require a special assistance (eg. Hidden disability)
FRUSTRATIONS	Currently there's a bunch of signs /instructions displayed that overwhelm passengers and make the departure process more complicated.	New technologies help airport workers to ease their workload during the departure process, although elderly passengers tend to struggle interacting with the digital transformation.	Family members want to ensure that their kids who travel alone are safely onboard. Especially in peak hours, having many people around increases their anxiety.
QUOTABLE QUOTE	<i>"A lot of people walk past the signs without even looking, but we're expected to be aware of each stage of the departure process"</i>	<i>"Standing in a queue isn't easy when you get old or have a medical condition. There needs to be a consideration for those"</i>	<i>"I want to be able to see my kids off, so that at least I know they're onboard"</i>

INFORMATION ARCHITECTURE

Ideate how information can be provided at each station of the departure process





SOLUTION

Develop the digital solution



INFORMATION PANEL

Digital solution

There used to be iPad-sized panels allocated at the terminal where passengers could send feedback or leave comments about their experience, however, they were all dismissed and pushed into storage since the pandemic.

Airports are suffering from a staff shortage, identified as one of the biggest issues that cause the lack of information and assistance.

If these panels were brought back on the floors to assist passengers as airport guides, it could save a lot of time for both passengers and airport staff.

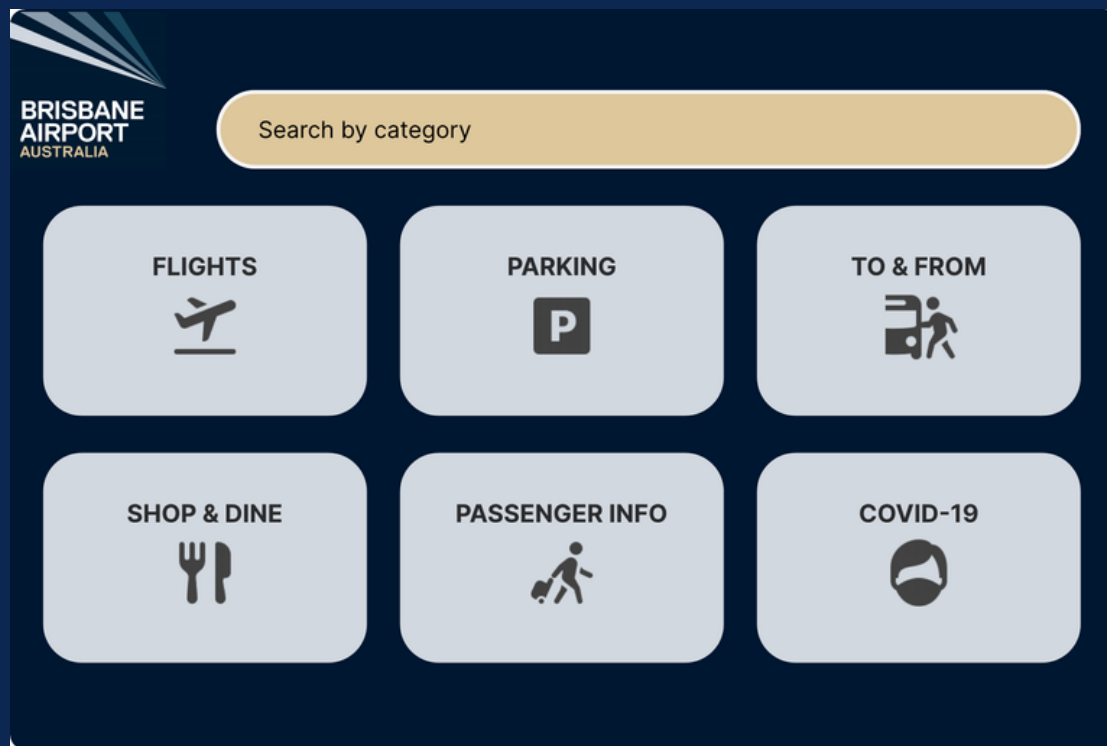
But remember ...

Digital solutions could never replace physical assistance when it comes to the Airport as interaction with technology isn't always at every passenger's capability.



UI DESIGN

Design mockup screens of the information panel by simply reflecting the contents on the BAC website.



To create a better digital space, it's significant to consider the solution is accessible to all passengers in order to obtain the information they need.



The information panel should offer information /instructions that are specified for each location.



There is a lot of information provided on the BAC website. Instead of expecting passengers to visit the website, the Airport can offer the opportunity to find them!



LEARNINGS

Coming into 5 years of being an Airport staff, this case study allowed me to rethink what we do and why we're here. We start to lose what it's like to come to the Airport as a traveler.

The pandemic gave us an opportunity to realize how amazing it was to travel around the world, and the Airport is the starting point to each of our adventure.

Speaking with real passengers helped me uncover the frustrations and anxiety they face during the departure process. More importantly, it made me realize the responsibility we have to assist passengers until being onboard safely.

NEXT STEPS

I would like to explore the potential opportunities in a digital space to generate a better experience in finding the right information for passengers and how Airport staff can provide further assistance.

The Airport is a great place to practice "**Phygital Experience**" (Physical + Digital) to connect between the Airport workers and passengers.

The case study contributed the fundamentals of human behaviours and cultural differences to design a better way-finding to assist passengers without fears.



THANK YOU

For your attention!

