Show highlights

Border control made smoother

Sheikh Saeed Hall, S1–C1

The UAE Ministry of Interior, General Directorate of Residency and Foreigners Affairs, is aiming to make passing through UAE airports a fast and smooth process, with a new 'Smart Passenger' project.

The GDRFA has partnered with Emaratech to develop a new contactless technology for passport control, that would mean that nationals, residents and visitors could pass through passport control without having to stop for any sort of passport or care reader. At present, users of the UAE eGate smart card can pass through passport control in 20 seconds, but the project will aim to cut this to just six seconds.

The solution will be based on 'Iris on the Move' technology, which can scan an eye from just a glance, and while the user is moving.

Col. Khalid Nasser Al Razooqi, General Director of E-Services Sector, of the Ministry of Interior, GDRFA, explains: "Smart Passenger is an upgrade, that will use new

Col Khalid Al Razooqi and Col Hussain Ahmed announce the 'Smart Passenger' project.

technology to process passengers without the immigration officer stopping them. We don't want people to stop, they can just proceed through the gate, they don't need to look into the camera."

The project will go through a twelve months R&D phase followed by six months testing and deployment. The Smart Passenger is intended to be rolled out at terminals 1, 2 and 3 of Dubai Airport and Al Mak-

toum, before UAE-wide deployment. GGDRFA is also extending the ease of use of the eGate program, with a number of kiosks now installed in malls to make it more convenient to access services.

eHDF unveils news service

Hall 6, CLD–17

EHOSTING DataFort (eHDF), a managed IT services provider and a member of TECOM Investments, has launched its public cloud services this week. Among the first cloud service providers in the region, eHDF owns and operates multiple data centres in Dubai and offers customers the advantage of hosting all data within the UAE.

SMBs will be able to buy locally-hosted services. Multiple configurations and OS flavours will be available and the platform will allow quick scale-up, providing a model with no capital investments on hardware. eHDF has set up an online store and catalogue that allows clients to customize and buy the public cloud services that they require from US $150 per month.

Yasser Zeineldin, CEO at eHostig DataFort, says: "Small- to-medium businesses have been under-served in the region so far, and our public cloud solutions are an endeavour to fulfil the gap in the market for effective enterprise-grade cloud computing solutions suitable for the SMB sector. Cloud service providers will have to ensure that their services evolve robustly to meet varying customer requirements and allow users the freedom to choose between platforms such as private, public or hybrid cloud.

RTA offers smart taxi apps

Shkh Saeed Hall, S3–B11

DUBAI'S Roads and Transport Authority has embraced the smartphone revolution and developed some novel ways of getting around the city. Its first app offers a new way of ordering a taxi, and seeks to revolutionise RTA's taxi workflow system. It all starts with a simple shake of your smartphone.

"Normally when you want a taxi you wave your hand. Now, with this new app, all you have to do is shake your phone," says Adeli Shakri, Director, Transportation Systems Department, RTA.

The customer's location is unimportant. Whether outdoors or at

A cab is now just a shake away.

home, upon accessing the app and shaking their handset, the app communicates with the RTA's servers and GPS system to locate the nearest taxi to the shaken phone.

Not only is the relevant cab dispatched, but the user receives a profile of the driver, and can monitor the progress of the assigned car to their location via a map view. In addition, the system will track the user's progress en route to their destination and offer them the opportunity to rate the driver's performance.

Shakri also highlighted that customers would be able to pay fares from the back seat through a standard chip-and-pin machine. Also in the back seat, on a screen embedded in the driver's headrest, is a Web browser system that allows access to Emirates airline booking system, so if the passenger is on their way to the airport they can check in, and if they are meeting a flight they can check on its progress.

Another app of which RTA is particularly proud is Wojhati ('my destination'), which is designed around Dubai's bus and rail transit services. Via GPS, it directs a user from origin to destination, using the best route and means of travel.

The app also updates the user on the progress of the suggested travel, be it train or bus. While Wojhati is available for download at GITEX, all apps will be rolled out over the coming months and all will be available by early January.

Julfar shares future vision

Zabeel Hall, Z–A20 & Z–A10

Ahmad Abdulkarim Julfar, the CEO of Etisalat Group, yesterday predicted a positive future for the telecoms industry during the morning session of GSMA Mobile 360 Series-Middle East conference at Dubai World Trade Centre.

During the keynote presentation, 'A Digital Future within Reach,' Julfar said telecoms operators "have the ability to empower society and create significant value within economies like never before".

He said mobile data is "the new oil" that will fuel business decisions and he expects telecoms will improve lives through connected cities and smart buildings, and digital governments. Citing international studies, Julfar said in the Middle East and Africa revenues from mobile internet will treble, and mobile data traffic will grow 17 times from 2012 to 2017, giving the region an annual growth rate of 77%.

Julfar said the traffic and services that will be used most in the future are the over-the-top-related downloads and argued that telecoms companies and internet companies working "together in harmony" and partnering with government would benefit customers the most.

In 2011, mobile technology contributed US $132 billion to the economies of the Arab States.