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No need to panic if your smalls go missing

Lost luggage is a problem, but it needn't leave you with your knickers in a twist. The next time you travel by air, there is a reasonable chance that your undies – as well as the rest of your belongings – will disappear from the airline's radar.

According to SITA – www.sita.com - the company that airlines use to track lost luggage in 220 countries and territories, the air transport industry is losing in the region of \$2.5 billion annually because of misconnects and mishandled baggage.

In a report published this week, SITA also revealed that on current calculations 30 million bags are mishandled annually with the number of bags lost or stolen running at about 204,000 per annum.

However, according to Adam Dalby, Managing Director of i-TRAK, a company that identifies travellers' luggage similar to how a car number plate is able to locate the owner of the car, the problem is probably worse than SITA reports.

“SITA claims that 30 million bags are mishandled every year and yet only 204,000 are lost,” he comments. “In reality this figure is probably 5-10 times higher. Talk to any insurance company and they will tell you that their biggest claim is lost luggage.”

”Given the scale of the lost luggage problem, travellers simply cannot abrogate responsibility for the safety of their luggage and trust to luck that the airlines will look after it for them. The airline industry is under such

commercial pressure that the need to cut costs means that the problem is certainly not going to get better and if anything will become even worse.”

One solution constantly touted is RFID (Radio Frequency Identification), however, according to Dalby: “Thinking RFID is the solution to eradicating the nightmare of lost luggage globally is very premature. Currently it would be a bit like owning a mobile phone handset without the networks for coverage - great piece of technology but no service to use it. It requires massive infrastructure being built into every airport in the world to be a true solution.”

So where does that leave the traveller? One solution, perhaps, is for air passengers to travel lightly and cram all of their garments into a single piece of hand luggage. Let’s face it, most people should travel with fewer clothes. Who’s going to need a woolly pullover in the sunshine in the Algarve?!

But of course people do like to account for all possibilities. We are British, after all. Unexpected rain in the Med. A heatwave in Iceland. It happens!

Meanwhile, i-TRAK is one service that is capable of enabling airlines to reunite passengers with their lost belongings. It works by enabling airlines to send a message directly to the owner through their internal systems, including phone, email, Internet and direct airline link. i-TRAK sends information through an SMS message, by email, over the Internet or by phone. In short, the traveller has a fast and easy method of getting their luggage back.

So the next time you travel and feel slightly exposed, you’ve several choices: pray that your luggage appears on the conveyor belt, travel lightly, or use a service like i-TRAK and make sure you’re covered.

Ends

For further information about the SITA report, please visit:

http://www.sita.com/News_Centre/Press_releases/Press_releases_2006/Mishandled_baggage_costing_2.5_billion_USD_as_air_travel_passenger_numbers_soar_to_2billion_say_SITA.htm

About i-TRAK

i-TRAK was founded in 2000 to provide luggage and personal item tracking solutions for travellers and the travel industry. i-TRAK for luggage was launched in January 2003 and was followed by i-TRAK micro labels for passports and other travel items in February 2006.

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