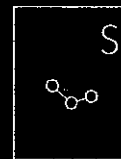
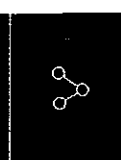
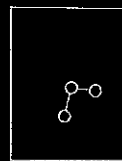
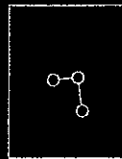


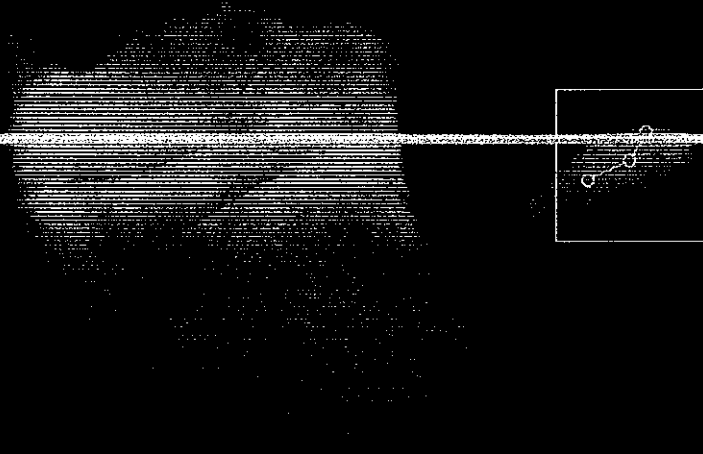
BASIC



SECURITY

Blazing A Trail For Biometrics At Airports

By Colleen Chamberlain



In April 2008, airport members of AAAE formed the Biometric Airport Security Identification Consortium (BASIC) under the leadership of Jeanne Olivier, A.A.E., now assistant director-aviation security and technology for the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey.

At the time, with the potential threat of an unfunded mandate by either Congress or TSA that would in short order require biometrics as part of airports' badging and access control systems, the consortium's founding members wanted proactively to outline a framework for introducing biometrics into the airport badging environment.

The goal was to create a framework that not only met the security objectives of Washington, D.C., policymakers but also satisfied the individual operational needs of airport operators.

From the beginning, airports participating in BASIC have focused on two key areas: 1) creating, in collaboration with TSA and with the help and expertise of its technical advisory committee, a comprehensive Concept of Operations that details an airport-driven framework for implementing biometric-based interoperable credentials; and 2) proactively implementing elements of this Concept of Operations at airports, an effort that is referred to as the Early Adopter program.

The BASIC Concept of Operations defines the roles and responsibilities for key players operating within the framework. The federal government and TSA in particular are responsible for the vetting and vetting requirements for aviation workers. Airport operators are responsible for enrollment,

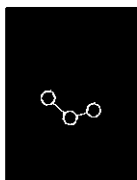
badge issuance and granting access control privileges. Central Status Service Providers are responsible for central functions that enable interoperability and a chain of trust among TSA, the airport operator and the badge holder.

The BASIC Concept of Operations dictates an open and vendor-neutral architecture, allowing for multiple entities to perform the role of Central Status Service Provider. The BASIC Concept of Operations also outlines a phased implementation with four distinct phases that allows airports to adopt elements of the framework over a period of time that is suitable to the size and circumstances of each facility.

Transportation Security Clearinghouse

At the same time that BASIC was forming, AAAE's Transportation Security Clearinghouse (TSC) was helping airports to comply with existing background check requirements, including biometric-based Criminal History Record Checks (CHRC) and biographic-based Security Threat Assessments (STAs). In particular, airports still were struggling with the new and expanded requirements related to STAs and questioning whether there were a better way to submit data than the cumbersome Excel spreadsheets.

In response, the TSC created a secure Web-based messaging system that allows airports to have a real-time link to the TSC over which they can submit both STA data and the electronic fingerprint transmission required for CHRCs. This Web-based messaging system, known as the TSC's Automated



In a recent survey of AAAE airport members, close to 75 percent of respondents indicated that they plan to **incorporate at least one or more phases of BASIC into their future plans related to credentialing and access control.**

Integration Services, also provides a channel for providing information, such as background check results, back to a connected airport.

Under the Early Adopter program, BASIC airports were the first to take advantage of the TSC's Automated Integration Services. Phase I of the BASIC Concept of Operations calls for the combined submission of STA and CHRC data in a secure transmission to a Central Status Service Provider. To date, the TSC has acted as the Central Status Service Provider for BASIC Early Adopter airports, such as San Francisco International, Newark Liberty International and Colorado's Aspen-Pitkin County, enabling these airports to submit required data in real-time in a secure Web-based message. Other airports, such as Los Angeles International and Salt Lake City International, also effectively have transitioned to the TSC's Automated Integration Services, even though they are not considered officially part of the BASIC Early Adopter program.

Data Submissions

The efforts of the BASIC Early Adopters and other pioneer airports using the TSC's Automated Integration Services led to TSA's issuing guidance earlier this year that grants airports using the TSC's approved messaging structure relief from submitting both daily and monthly spreadsheet updates of STA data. This is significant since AAAE and the TSC have long been working on behalf of airports to ease compliance with STA data requirements.

In particular, AAAE and the TSC have focused a great deal on the monthly submissions, as they create a significant burden on airport operators, can cause unintended data corruption if submitted incorrectly, and, most importantly, do not add any security value. In addition to policy advocacy on eliminating the monthly submission requirement, AAAE and the TSC also pursued technical and operational solutions that would ease the burden of monthly submissions. As a result, by submitting data in real-time using secure Web-based messaging through the TSC's Automated Integration Services, airports no longer have to use an Excel spreadsheet for STA update or monthly submissions, effectively eliminating the burden of separate monthly submissions.


Next Steps

Now, the BASIC Early Adopter airports are

looking forward to Phase II, which, according to the Concept of Operations, involves the use of a trusted and secure biometric, known as a reference biometric, which is returned to the airport by the Central Status Service Provider. Because the TSC's Automated Integration Services uses a two-way messaging structure, the secure channel already exists for the TSC to return digitally signed biometric templates of the same biometric used for the CHRC back to airports for use in the operational airport environment. For example, an airport could use the reference biometric at the time of badge issuance to verify that the individual accepting an airport badge is the same individual that provided his or her fingerprints for the required CHRC background check.

Due to the leadership of BASIC Chair Olivier, the expertise and guidance of the BASIC Technical Advisory Committee, and the operational support of the TSC of the Early Adopter program, BASIC has earned critical recognition by TSA and the biometric and identity management industry as a proven path forward for airports interested in introducing biometrics into their credentialing and access control systems.

In fact, in a recent survey of AAAE airport members, close to 75 percent of respondents indicated that they plan to incorporate at least one or more phases of BASIC into their future plans related to credentialing and access control. The greatest number of respondents indicated plans to move forward with Phase I, which is the combination of STA and CHRC data submission into a single secure submission. This is reflected in the dozens of airports that are currently in various stages of connecting into the TSC's Automated Integration Services.

AAAE airport and corporate members are welcome to join BASIC or its technical advisory committee. To join BASIC, contact Colleen Chamberlain, AAAE, at (703) 575-2460. Airports interested in the TSC's Automated Integration Services should contact the TSC Customer Service Center directly at (703) 797-2550. 

Colleen Chamberlain is AAAE's staff vice president, transportation security policy. She may be reached at colleen.chamberlain@aaae.org.