Internet of Things yet to embrace individuals in travel

By Travolution

Individual customers are not always the best target when it comes to travel companies embracing the Internet of Things (IoT).

That was the message of Matthew Hall, chief operating officer at London City Airport, who was speaking at software company DataArt's third question time event in London, based on travel and the IoT.

He said: "The systems that we have progressed so far have not involved personal data – we have trained cameras on the top of people's heads to record passenger numbers. We do not hold any personal data.

"The next stop for us is to start integrating data into an app and that obviously requires passengers to opt-in."

The airport developed an app in 2013 before trialling it. It focussed on making the individual passenger journey more comfortable and efficient through pushing retail offers and providing information on Transport for London services.

"At the moment we are focussing on 100% of our customers. We will tailor an app if and when we feel it is needed," continued Hall.

"We use developing technologies at the airport to keep the check-in, security and boarding process as quick and efficient as possible.

"We can do things like have the right stands ready for the right aircraft quicker."Mr Hall said earlier in the evening: "People do not travel because they want to go to the airport.

"We want to get you through there as efficiently and comfortably as possible. We want to join the dots. We do not think airports are destinations."

Paul Saggar, group director of IT at Maybourne Hotel Group, added: "We are looking at other areas we could use wearable tech and the IoT.

"We're not absolutely sure yet whether it is needed for things like check-in. We are looking at ways we could use wearable tech for our own staff.

"We thought about Google Glass. We deal with a lot of high profile guests. Wouldn't it be great if when they arrive our staff get an image and fact box on who the guest is on their retina. There is a privacy issue there though.

"A lot of our staff already carry around mobile devices. Do they really need something on their wrist as well?"