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**Media Contact:**  
Chrystèle Pourret  
Marketing & Communication Coordinator  
chrystele.pourret@a2ia.com

**A2iA S.A:**  
40 bis rue Fabert  
75007 Paris - France  
+33 1 44 42 00 80 office  
+33 1 44 42 00 81 fax

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**A2iA technology in application:  
Swissport's API (Advanced Passenger Information) System**

*For over a year now, Swissport has been successfully utilising an automatic address recognition system, sold by Rochford Thompson with a built-in A2iA FieldReader engine, at Zurich airport.*

*This system solves the problem presented by new obligations imposed by the American authorities, who require the place of residence of all passengers flying to the United States.*

**PARIS, July 3, 2007** - A 100% owned subsidiary of the Spanish group Ferrovial, Swissport International Ltd is the main supplier of ground services to airlines. Swissport is currently present at 180 airports around the world and serves over 70 million passengers. The company's turnover was 1,070 billion dollars in 2006 and it employs over 23,000 people. One of Swissport's major product lines is security, operated under the trade name Checkport.

Since October 2005, the United States requires all passengers (non-resident in the USA) to provide a place of residence to the American authorities during their stay in the USA, using the APIS system (Advanced Passenger Information System). Initially, this information capture had to be carried out at check-in, which considerably increased the time needed and caused significant problems during the aircraft boarding process.

This is why, two years ago, Swissport began seeking a solution to speed up these procedures. There was the further problem of passengers in transit, whose data was not transmitted by the systems at their place of check-in: as the time available to make the connecting flights was limited, there was a serious risk of flight delays.

So the decision was taken to process this formality directly at the boarding gate, in order to speed up the process. To this end, the English company **Rochford Thompson, a document scanning specialist (passports, identity cards, airline tickets and cheques), offered Swissport a solution - integrating the A2iA FieldReader engine - to automate address data input.** The two companies then worked in collaboration to improve this solution and to create a link with the SWISS airline's check-in system.

The solution comes in the form of a PC-scanner unit. At the check-in area, passengers fill in a form which has been specially developed by Swissport, on which they give their place of residence in the United States. At boarding, this form is placed in the scanner, then the A2iA FieldReader software locates and recognises the destination address, based on an American postal directory. The address data is then automatically transmitted to the DCS (Departure Control System).

In March 2006, five of these systems were installed in Zurich airport's transfer area. Two of the systems - mobile ones - were subsequently scheduled to be installed in the check-in area. The purpose of these mobile units is to enable passengers to enter the information while they are queuing, and therefore make the most of wasted time to speed up the process.



At Zurich airport, boarding for all flights to the United States takes place from a specific terminal, with one morning flight, 5 flights between 11.00 and 13.30 and one afternoon flight. The API system is only used at peak times, that is to say between 10.30 and 12.00.

The API system is directly linked to the American postal directory, which has halved the address processing time. A copy of this database is currently installed locally on each system. A solution incorporating a central database server is currently being planned to improve system performance.

*"We are extremely happy with this API system. By using this innovative cursive handwriting recognition technology in a system which is perfectly adapted to our specific needs, we have been able to meet the requirements of the American government without disrupting traffic or causing flight delays,"* comments Rico Barandun, the Swissport Project Manager.

#### **About A2iA**

A2iA (Artificial Intelligence & Image Analysis), founded in 1991, headquartered in New York and Paris, is known as the worldwide leading developer of Intelligent Word Recognition (IWR) technology for extracting information from natural freeform and cursive handwriting on paper documents. The company's technology has been helping paper-intensive industries reduce data entry costs and improve business process automation for over 16 years. A2iA's recognition engines harmonize their OCR, ICR and IWR technologies with their image analysis, artificial intelligence and neural network systems to enhance solutions from the world's leading systems integrators and other independent software vendors. For more information: [www.a2ia.com](http://www.a2ia.com).