



Points of Reference & Fact

Review of Document

“Common Use Passenger Processing Systems (CUPPS)
Frequently Asked Questions”

Clearing The Air

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Common Use Passenger Processing Systems (CUPPS) Frequently Asked Questions

Boyd International has reviewed a recently-circulated document entitled, "Common Use Passenger Processing Systems (CUPPS), Frequently Asked Questions."

The document clearly is engineered as an advocacy piece for the CUPPS program. Unfortunately, it is incomplete in that several of the "answers" are neither comprehensive nor fully explanatory.

A Solution To A Non-Existent Problem

The main foundation of the arguments for CUPPS – which is a system that is essentially based on an approach developed seven years ago – is that there is a "need" for a "global solution" and that solution is CUPPS.

The only problem with this belief is that there is not a "global problem" for which the CUPPS system is a current solution. In the years since CUPPS was envisioned, technology has moved on, providing much more cost-effective solutions.

Subordinating Customer Needs To A Bureaucracy

As a "recommended" practice, CUPPS is inefficient and imposes unnecessary burdens on users.

The most onerous is the requirement for on-going "certification" where users must get approval from a giant bureaucracy should they seek any changes that are not specifically within the CUPPS specifications. Other, more recent approaches do not tether airlines and airports to having to unnecessarily seek outside (and time-consuming) approval for changes and upgrades they see as necessary to their operations.

A "Goal" That's Not Only Unnecessary, But Impossible To Reach

Implicit in the CUPPS advocacy is the contention that CUPPS will mean that airlines will only need to support a single application, or environment. This assumes facts not only not in evidence, but not in existence.

To make this a reality, all airlines would need a CUPPS application and all airports would need a CUPPS platform. Today and in the future, this simply is no longer attainable. **Many airlines and airports have already stated they will not ever do CUPPS, meaning the original objective (one system for all airlines and airports) is now a pipe dream.** In this reality, this means that airlines in the future that do choose to develop a CUPPS application will not be supporting "one" application, but rather "one more" application.

In this report, we expand on the responses to the FAQs, to bring additional clarity to the subject matter. The FAQ responses are provided in black. In red are discussions of the realities, which, unfortunately often are not consistent with the FAQ document.

The original intent of CUPPS – one global standard and one global approach – is now simply a pipe dream.

Many airlines and airports have already decided CUPPS is not the best option, which is fatal to the goal of "one system."

General questions about the CUPPS standard

FAQ Statement: How did the CUPPS initiative get started?

CUPPS grew out of the Seattle Summit, held in 2003, with the aim of finding common ground where airports and airlines could cooperate to enhance efficiency and achieve financial savings. These stakeholders concluded that the air transport industry could not continue to support multiple vendor-specific implementations of different common use environments. Following an initial review of CUTE RP1797, IATA and ATA's Joint Passenger Services Conference (representatives of the world's air carriers) instructed the stakeholders, through the auspices of the IATA CUSS Management Group, to establish a sub-group to address Common Use standards, thus, in 2004, the CUPPS initiative was born. The JPSC was advised on CUPPS progress annually.

Clarification/Analysis

CUPPS' standards were established seven years ago, and represent not only a "need" that no longer is imperative, but, as noted below, impose unnecessary costs and regulations on the industry.

Just as examples, technology has made huge strides since CUPPS was envisioned...

- **Facebook, launched Feb. 4, 2004**
- **Google Maps launched Feb. 8, 2005**
- **Twitter, officially launched July 15, 2006**
- **Apple iPhone released June 29, 2007**
- **Amazon Kindle released in U.S. Nov. 19, 2007**
- **Apple iPad introduced on Jan. 27, 2010**
- **First all-robotic surgery performed Oct. 13, 2010**

The point is that CUPPS represents technology that does not embrace advances since 2004.

FAQ Statement: What are the benefits of a common use standard to the air transport industry?

A Recommended Practice with the associated technical standard for common use environments simplifies the business of common use for the entire air transport industry.

The CUPPS standard brings the following benefits to airlines:

- *Allows Airlines to have a single CUPPS application that will work as expected on CUPPS-Certified platforms implemented by any common use supplier.*

Reality: Each airline will be encumbered with the cost of a requirement to develop a CUPPS-Certified application to enable

Think about it. Since CUPPS emerged way back in 2004, the global airline industry has changed, and technologies have moved well beyond the CUPPS approach.

their native computer system to work with a CUPPS-Certified platform, as well as with the certified vendor's software and hardware. This limits the range of vendor options for the airline to just those "certified." This is not a benefit to airlines.

- *Airlines with CUPPS-Certified applications can be confident that those applications can be deployed to any CUPPS airport without vendor-specific modifications.*

Reality: Airlines need not be put into the long-term technological straightjacket represented by CUPPS. Also, this requires the airline using CUPPS-Certified applications to have the unnecessary cost of recertification every five years. Other, more advanced virtualization options do not have this costly "tether" to specific vendors nor to the expense of recertification.

- *Airlines can be confident that they will be able to provide the same customer services and agent functions at any airport with a CUPPS-Certified platform.*

Reality: Airlines can provide the same customer service and agent functions only among CUPPS-Certified airports, however, service may differ from the service airlines are able to provide with their own computer system.

The CUPPS standard brings the following benefits to airports:

- *Allow airports to introduce a common use environment to their location for the first time with less impact to their airlines.*

Reality. The FAQ answer leaves out the fact that CUPPS restricts airports to a system and technology which may not be acceptable to non-IATA member airlines. It also implies that CUPPS is the only approach that can provide a common use environment, which is not accurate.

- *Allow airports to transition between suppliers of CUPPS-Certified platforms with little or no impact to their airlines.*

Reality: The operative term here is "CUPPS-Certified." Airports are unnecessarily limited to working only with suppliers of CUPPS-Certified platforms. This again raises costs due to restricted competition among suppliers, plus the re-certification costs. This does impact airlines with the potential for higher airport costs.

- *By commoditizing the common use product, airports should receive more competitive responses to their requests for proposals. This should reduce the cost of common use environments to airports – a savings that should be passed on to their tenant airlines.*

Reality: Within the context that only CUPPS-Certified vendors will be options, this statement is on its face nothing short of spurious. CUPPS is more of a "brand" than a commodity as it has specific

Other, more advanced approaches do not force users into a technological straightjacket, as does CUPPS.

CUPPS users are required to give up their technological independence, and get approval from a distant bureaucracy to make any changes outside of the CUPPS specs.

features (technical specifications and certification requirements) that differentiate it from other common use systems. True commoditization of an airport's common use environment would offer airlines greater flexibility and lower airport operating cost than would a branded system. A viable alternative to CUPPS is virtualization which permits common use processes to operate on non-branded off-the-shelf equipment and software creating a true commodity.

The CUPPS standard brings the following benefits to vendors:

- *Provides the framework to develop a global solution based on industry standards*

Reality: The "global solution" isn't one that's necessary, mainly because there is no "global problem." Virtualization – without the need for CUPPS – can be pursued, and without the onerous need to be re-certified and without the need for users to go only to selected vendors, which over time restricts software and hardware selection for users.

- *Opens the global common use market to all interested participants on the same basis*

Reality: To unnecessarily suggest that airports and airlines conform to a single common use system without regard to regional difference and corporate ability is simply not practical. The only vendors who benefit are those which hew to the 2004 mandate to overhaul RP 1797.

Homogenise the global market in terms of a single standard to be applied

- *All IATA & ATA Member airlines have voted CUPPS as the single global standard*

Reality: This is a bit misleading and implies that there is universal and enthusiastic support for CUPPS. It would be illuminating if the authors would comment on the following: how many airlines are currently and actively participating in the CUPPS workgroup? How does that differ from airline participation in 2003? It is understood that any airline not in attendance at a voting meeting is recorded as a "yes" vote. The authors of the FAQ document should clarify this. In addition, the largest passenger carrier in the US, Southwest, has made it clear that they do not support CUPPS.

I can deploy a cheap, non-standard common use, so why should I consider CUPPS?

There are other solutions available in the marketplace that may, on a first consideration, appear attractive to the common use provider, typically an airport. However, in all such circumstances, the purchase price is not the sole consideration for such an investment and effectively results in a proprietary

solution, something that goes against the ethos of common use. The needs and benefits for standardisation have been detailed above.

Reality: This is a patently parochial and misleading statement.

First, there are other less-expensive common use approaches. Use of the word "cheap" appears intended to imply "shoddy," which is not the case. Robust, economical, and flexible common use systems are installed in U.S. airports. These systems have proven to be a viable cost-effective (not "cheap") alternative to the single restrictive CUPPS standard.

Implying that CUPPS is the *de facto* singular option for common use passenger processing is misleading due to technological advances that make significantly less expensive and much more flexible systems available to both airports and airlines, yet accomplish the intended objectives of the IATA working group that developed the standard.

The approach known as "virtualization" - which also goes by terms such as Flexible Provisioning Environments (FPE) and Dynamic Airline Passenger Processing (DAPP) - is the only common use solution that provides the full functionality of the airline's native system. These systems are presently deployed in a number of airports utilizing off-the-shelf hardware and do not require certification nor customer airline applications for each system vendor. These are worthy, not "cheap" (reading *having little value*), and economical common use systems capable of growing with changing technology.

In any viable business, the cost of purchasing systems and ongoing operating cost are passed through to the end customer. In the case of common use systems built to CUPPS standards, higher cost resulting from a limited supplier base and the cost of maintaining certification will pass from vendor to the airport and to the airline customer.

Then there is the "ethos of common use" – a term that has zero meaning in the real world, as this "ethos" can be attained by other, more cost-effective and service-responsive approaches.

Finally the comment about the dangers of a proprietary solution should be taken seriously, because that is a good description of CUPPS. Regardless of what may be claimed, requiring airports and airlines to adopt a system that requires use of selected vendors and specific-source certification is constructively "proprietary."

How flexible is the CUPPS standard?

The CUPPS standard allows the adoption of new technology, such as advances in IT infrastructure or architecture, peripherals, or business functionality.

IT Infrastructure or Architecture: CUPPS is based on a standard Windows platform and utilizes standard networking technology. There is nothing that is

The FAQ document claims alternatives to CUPPS are outside of the "ethos of common use."

No, they are outside the arbitrary control of a distant bureaucracy that will set standards based on their definition of "global" - not local - requirements.

proprietary in nature, nor overly difficult from a programming or deployment standpoint.

Peripherals: The CUPPS standard supports the selection of peripherals from a variety of hardware manufacturers, rather than prescribing a single-source or "short-list" of options. For further details of commercial off-the-shelf technologies see the section on COTS below.

Business Process: The future of passenger processing continues to change, with the focus on self-managed travel by the passenger and new services and products available to the passenger. To ensure the industry delivers suitable tools and processes common use need to evolve to provide the necessary support.

Reality: Start with this: regardless of any "flexibility" there simply is no need for the "CUPPS standard" to be foisted on airlines and airports.

In any case, CUPPS is not the only game in town in regard to flexibility. Other virtualization systems are flexible and cost-efficient without the need to comply with an arbitrary "CUPPS standard." The answer also implies incorrectly that only CUPPS allows a variety of hardware and peripheral vendors, and incredibly, implies that CUPPS does not prescribe a "short list" of vendors. The fact is that for CUPPS, only "certified" vendors are allowed.

Airlines, an airport's primary customer, should not be required to adapt their customer service and operating processes to comply with any one airport's common use system. Other, less-expensive approaches deliver "suitable tools and process" also, and do so without being tied to CUPPS-specific certification.

Will the CUPPS standard allow airlines, airports, and common use suppliers to be innovative?

Yes. The CUPPS standard is built around the notion of flexibility and scalability to allow airlines, airports, and common use suppliers to be early adopters of new technologies and business processes as meets their business needs.

Reality: Any program dependent on decisions and regulations developed by a central committee does not tend to be "innovative" - as any such changes need to be reviewed, studied, and approved by a bureaucracy before implementation.

Innovation and flexibility with CUPPS apparently demands the user base have a lot of time and patience. The notion of flexibility and early adoption of new technologies and business processes is, at best, suspect as this work group took 7-years to develop the current CUPPS' Technical Specifications, which remains dependent on old technology.

Airlines and airports using CUPPS are free to be innovative...

... as long as they stay within the CUPPS specs and get bureaucratic dispensations if they need anything outside those specs.

Why do IATA, ATA and ACI support the CUPPS standard?

The member airlines of IATA and ATA requested their organisations to review CUTE and develop CUPPS to improve common use environments and voted to approve the CUPPS Recommended Practice.

The member airports of ACI voted to approve the CUPPS Recommended Practice. ACI supports the CUPPS standard at the request of its member airports.

Note: CUPPS is a recommended practice and thus is simply recommended by IATA/ATA/ACI as the standards for deploying common use. This does not preclude other solutions in the marketplace.

Reality: The last statement is the key: the “recommendation” by these groups does not preclude other solutions. And, in fact, it has not precluded airports and airlines from already eschewing both CUPPS and the recommendations, and pursuing other marketplace options.

Is an ACI Recommended Practice mandatory on the airport industry?

ACI Recommended Practices and Technical Standards are considered to be the most efficient and effective way of accomplishing a task, process or activity based on specifications and repeatable procedures that have proven themselves over time for ACI airport members and industry stakeholders. .

ACI Recommended Practices and Technical Standards are approved following a two-step review process, including the review by a specific committee or ACI working group, and a 2 month period for comments from the whole ACI membership.

After the review process has been completed, the RP as well as any significant comments received from ACI members are presented to the ACI Executive Committee and World Governing Board for approval.

ACI Recommended Practices are for the guidance of Airport Members and are not binding on them.

The CUPPS Technical Standard is ACI Recommended Practice 500A07

The CUPPS Technical Standard is the first ACI-ATA-IATA joint Recommended Practice.

Reality: Just because ACI has a recommended practice, it does not mean that it is the most efficient and effective way of accomplishing a task, particularly in light of the fact that it is based on 2004 technology, and is a “solution” to a problem that no longer exists.

Finances

How will the CUPPS standard impact the air transport industry's bottom line?

IATA undertook an extensive business case to quantify the cost-benefit of implementing CUPPS over allowing platform-specific common use solutions to

Regardless of who “supports” the CUPPS standard, such is not universal.

There are airports and airlines that are not supporters.

CUPPS is a “recommended practice” – the result of lengthy deliberations and reviews over seven years ago.

That does not mean that it's the best practice for all airports and airlines today.

proliferate. The IATA business case was based on input from airlines, airports, and common use vendors. This business case shows a significant savings to the air transport industry. In addition to the numbers gathered, there are avoidance costs of additional proprietary common use vendors not using the CUPPS standard.

The numbers are not compelling.

The fact still remains that CUPPS requires certification, re-certification, approval of locally-needed revisions that are outside of CUPPS specs, and will have limited vendor choice.

That's not a recipe for cost-effectiveness.

<i>Airline Savings</i>	<i>US\$ 75m</i>
<i>Airport Savings (top 200 airports)</i>	<i>US\$ 65m</i>
<i>Total Industry Savings per annum</i>	<i>US\$ 140m</i>
<i>5 Year Amortization for Airport upgrades</i>	<i>US\$ 25m</i>
<i>Net Business Case Year 1</i>	<i>US\$ 115m</i>

The IATA business case recognizes that there is expense involved to transition to CUPPS solutions. However, the business case also very clearly illustrates that this short-term expense is compensated by mid- and long-term savings.

Reality: Over 7-years of committee work dedicated to writing technical specifications, technical standards, and developing a certification program, CUPPS is alleged to save the global airline industry an amount estimated to be around 2 ten thousands (.0002) of the airline industry's annual operating costs. This does not, apparently, include the costs of certification and re-certification that other options do not impose on the user.

Regardless of the data, the hard fact is that, by the FAQ document's own admission, there are other "cheap" alternatives to CUPPS. This is in addition to the fact that other alternatives do not require recertification-by-committee every five years, nor restrict airports and airlines to only CUPPS-certified vendors.

It is uncertain whether the IATA business case considered technological advances since 2004, or if it only considered benefits from reducing the number of available legacy platforms. A reasonable cost-benefit analysis would compare CUPPS with a modern common use system that is currently in use. These figures, however, do not.

Can airlines of all sizes afford CUPPS?

Implementing and maintaining a single CUPPS application rather than multiple vendor-specific CUTE applications will be significantly less expensive for airlines of all sizes. Airlines – large and small – cannot afford for the number of non-standard CUTE solutions to continue to rise.

Reality: True, CUTE-type systems that are dependent on vendor specific software and hardware are costly and outdated. But CUPPS is not the only, nor the most cost-effective, alternative.

Indeed, CUPPS is not the most cost effective replacement for CUTE as it too is dependent on specific vendors, hardware, and software as defined by CUPPS specifications and certification requirements. Each airline must build a CUPPS application, have it certified, and re-certified any time the application is revised. That is clumsy, inefficient, and inferior to other options that do not impose such arbitrary requirements on the user.

It is not an issue of whether an airline can afford CUPPS, it is whether CUPPS is the most cost-effective alternative.

Can CUPPS reduce the cost for airlines to enter a new market / route?

All airlines benefit from ease of entrance at an airport with a CUPPS-Certified environment. Airlines of all sizes can begin service to a new airport with a CUPPS-Certified platform and be confident that their CUPPS applications will work as expected without vendor-specific modifications.

Reality: All airlines benefit from ease of entrance at an airport offering a common use environment. Airlines of all sizes will benefit from operating at airports providing the most flexible and economic common use system. Systems open to new technology allowing airlines to connect directly to their native operating system are proving to be the more economical systems.

Actually, the point can be made that since CUPPS requires expensive re-certification, the added costs could raise airport operating expense. Nevertheless, in over 25 years of working with airports and airlines in air service recruitment, Boyd Group International has never had a single experience where this single area of cost has even been mentioned. It is really a stretch for the authors of the FAQs to intimate that CUPPS could be an advantage for airports seeking expanded air service.

The CUPPS Technical Specification has a list of Required, Defined devices. Will this make airport-supplier contracts for common use environments more expensive or more complex?

The CUPPS standard recognizes that each contractual agreement for a CUPPS-Certified product will be unique according to the needs of the airport and its tenant airlines. The CUPPS standard does not compel an airport to refresh hardware outside the time frame specified in the airport-supplier contract. The concept of Required, Defined devices was born out of the desire of CUPPS to remain relevant in the world of fast changing business processes and supporting technology. This is a key element of the strategy to support such change quickly, efficiently and remain cost effective. Airline Savings US\$ 75m Airport Savings (top

To intimate that CUPPS will be an advantage and enhancement to recruiting airline service is patently ridiculous.

200 airports) US\$ 65m Total Industry Savings per annum US\$ 140m 5 Year Amortization for Airport upgrades US\$ 25m

Reality: This does not hold water. CUPPS is less cost-effective and with a requirement to recertify, it is much more complex than alternatives.

Yes. With CUPPS, airlines can go after any functionality that they want or require.

But only as long as it is within the CUPPS specs, done by a certified CUPPS vendor, and - if outside the specs – has the prior blessing of a distant bureaucracy.

Presumably, that's to make sure nothing escapes the "ethos of common use."

Whatever that is.

Suppliers will need to purchase Technical Specifications and Technical Standards from IATA and change (write code) for their products to meet CUPPS specifications and standards. Suppliers and their products (both hardware and software) must be tested and certified by independent Compliance Testing Entities (CTE) that are approved by the IATA CUPPS committee. Certification is valid for approximately 5-years. This is complexity and cost not necessary with alternatives which are newer.

The cost of certification will be included in pricing for CUPPS platforms, meaning it is paid for by the airport that installs the system, then recouped in user fees charged to airlines, and ultimately underwritten by passengers in the form of higher fares.

Because of the time and money that certification requires, it is likely to limit the number of vendors willing to venture into the CUPPS arena. This will prevent airlines, airports, and their passengers from realizing the benefits of hyper competition, including pricing and innovation.¹ To illustrate this point, only a handful of vendors have been active in the CUPPS initiative, including development of technical specifications and pilot programs to test the standard in "real world" airport environments.

CUPPS and Airline Business Processes

Will the CUPPS standard allow airlines to utilise any functionality that they want or require?

The CUPPS standard allows airlines to implement any operational, commercial, or customer services business processes that they require. The CUPPS standard was designed to foster consistency across all of an airline's airports, a vital component of a global business. A series of proprietary solutions do not support this global perspective.

The CUPPS standard has been designed specifically not to limit the functionality or the business processes that an airline may implement within their CUPPS applications. Airlines may implement any and all business processes in CUPPS that they require.

Reality: This makes sense within the context of an airline selecting CUPPS as its standard. But the truth is that they do not need to do so.

¹ By its very nature as a "standard", innovation will likely be stifled in the CUPPS environment.

At airports with a CUPPS environment, airlines have basically two choices:

- 1. Develop an application to accommodate the CUPPS standard and use the system in accordance with IATA/ATA/ACI's "Recommended Practice" or**
- 2. Supply its own hardware to pass through the CUPPS platform.**

If item two above is the airline's choice, why should an airport have a CUPPS platform?

Another recurring theme in the FAQ document is the "global perspective." It is implied that CUPPS is needed to attain this lofty, but vacuous goal. With today's technology – as opposed to the 2004 CUPPS approach – there are no compelling reasons that airports and airports need this as a "vital component of global business." The needs and IT approach used at, say, Charlotte, or Omaha, or Syracuse have to do with running the local airport cost-efficiently, regardless of whether such are consistent or compliant with the systems used at Beijing, Nairobi, or Muskegon.

Does the CUPPS standard allow airlines to collect ancillary revenue such as baggage fees and seat upgrades?

Yes. The CUPPS standard supports an airline's ability to collect fares and fees and to sell ancillary goods and services.

Reality: That's very nice. But all common use systems support this ability. With CUPPS airlines must adhere to the required process for retrieving data, plus – again – the expense and aggravation of going through a bureaucratic process to get it recertified on a periodic basis.

Does the CUPPS standard support technical solutions to enable workforce mobility, such as tablet computers?

CUPPS platforms and applications could be used on tablet computers or any other hardware solutions that enable workforce mobility, even though CUTE has been traditionally associated with workstations at the ticketing and check-in counter, departure gate, and back office.

Reality. A nice feature. But CUPPS is not needed for an airline's mobile devices as they use the airport's wireless access network, or other wireless data systems, to connect with and run the airline's computer system.

CUPPS and the Marketplace

Will CUPPS foster competition between common use suppliers?

Yes. Moving from individual proprietary solutions to a global standard drives competition in the market for common use solutions. CUPPS has been developed

Other "proprietary" systems?

By requiring use of certified vendors and systems, it is CUPPS that is constructively a "proprietary system."

to provide that platform to support an increase in competition between common use suppliers.

Reality: This is a contention that makes no sense. If CUPPS were to achieve the IATA work group's objective of global domination (all member airlines only use CUPPS) then the pool of common use system suppliers would be limited only to those maintaining a CUPPS certification. What competition is fostered where everyone builds their product to a common standard, particularly one generated years ago?

Is CUPPS ready to be used in a live airport operation?

Yes. There are multiple CUPPS platforms that have been certified and are available for installation. Following the pilots programme in 2009, these platforms continue to be used by airlines as part of their day-to-day operation with overwhelming success. A number of airports are now planning full-scale CUPPS installations in 2011.

Reality: Yes, they may be available, but which airport(s) has a common use facility that only runs a certified CUPPS platform? And, not noted in the FAQ document, there are airports that have rejected CUPPS – available or not – as an option.

Airline Applications

Will airlines really be able to use one application on all CUPPS-Certified platforms without modifications?

Yes. The airlines that took part in the pilots programme validated the ability to move their application from one CUPPS site to another without any vendor-specific modifications.

Reality: We can only assume that if the 2009 pilot test program was a "success," then CUPPS would not be installed anywhere without more comprehensive data. At least two of the airports, only a very limited number of agent sets were CUPPS-capable, which is hardly a fully pressure-tested program.

Can airlines use browser-based/web applications in CUPPS?

Yes. Airlines can use any application architecture that they feel best suits their users and their business needs. This includes browser-based/web applications.

Reality: Not quite. These can only be utilized with CUPPS-appropriate applications and equipment.

Will airlines need to use applications provided by a third party in the CUPPS environment?

The CUPPS standard has been designed for total flexibility and so allows an airline to implement their applications in the manner that best suits their technical and business needs. An airline may develop its own application

internally, commission an application from a third party, license an existing product from a third party, or any combination of the above.

Reality: If an airline does not have, or chooses not to use, its own IT resources to develop a CUPPS application, it must purchase an application from one of the IATA-certified third party vendors. Not necessarily any vendor of its choosing, but only one certified by IATA.

Certification

Why is Certification required for CUPPS platforms and applications?

Certification for CUPPS platforms is the process by which adherence to the CUPPS standard is ensured and protects all airlines operating in a common use environment against any unforeseen problems. This addresses a key short-coming in the CUSS model of self-certification, whereby the adherence to the standard was self-declared by each supplier and therefore true portability was never achieved. Adherence to the standard is what ensures portability, which in turn is what enables the cost savings clearly documented by IATA in the CUPPS business case. This is one of the cornerstones of the CUPPS standard and not available in proprietary solutions.

Reality: What certification “ensures and protects” is users from flexibility to quickly and independently pursue other systems as technology or their needs evolve. It also “ensures” IATA control. The need for certification may have been valid in 2004, but it is nothing more than an expensive bureaucratic nuisance today. But the FAQ is correct in pointing out that this hassle is not “available” with other solutions.

CUPPS and COTS Products

Does CUPPS only support industry-specific AEA printing?

The CUPPS standard supports printing via both the general-purpose Windows interface and the AEA industry-specific interface. The CUPPS standard supports both COTS and AEA-specific printers in order to provide a smooth transition for airlines that may be on different technology timelines.*

Reality: Full disclosure would be appreciated here. The CUPPS standard does not support all printing processes used at various airports. The standard only supports CUPPS-certified and AEA specific printers.

Does CUPPS support Commercial off-the-shelf (*COTS) hardware that provides cost-effective solutions for common use environments?

Peripherals deployed in common use have changed dramatically over the last number of years driven largely with the move from ATB documents to plain paper equivalents as part of the IATA StB programme (BCBP specifically). However, commercial off-the-shelf hardware for airport operations should not be confused with products designed for home use. Airport operational products are

“Certification” today only means that the intention is to limit options for airlines and airports to selected vendors.

There is no fundamental need for airlines and airports to beg approval from an outside organization.

designed for a 24/7 operation, home printers are not. The reduction in the costs of printers from ATB to plain paper has reduced the hardware costs by as much as 75% cheaper in real terms.

Reality: Any hardware can be utilized on a CUPPS installation - provided, of course, that it be CUPPS certified. Non-CUPPS certified equipment may not be used.

CUPPS and Virtualization

Does the CUPPS standard allow common use vendors, airports and airlines to use virtualization?

Yes. A CUPPS-Certified platform can be implemented at an airport using virtualized servers or virtualized desktops.

However, the use of virtualization in a common use environment does not negate the need for a common use standard. A virtualized non-standard common use environment is still a non-standard common use environment. Airlines will need to integrate their applications with any virtualized non-standard common use environment, incurring both manpower and travel expenses.

Reality: The entire argument that a global standard is necessary is simply bogus, and one that is tailored to supporting the need for CUPPS. As demonstrated by airlines and airports deciding to eschew the need for CUPPS, the need for a common standard is not one that is universally supported.

An alternative virtualized common use environment, a flexible provisioning environment (FPE), is not required to meet CUPPS standards. A virtualized non-standard common use environment is still a common use environment and airports can use virtualization to run CUPPS. How's that for committee double talk?

The point is that virtualization makes the need for CUPPS irrelevant. Airports can get the benefits without the expense of a CUPPS platform.

Maybe CUPPS can utilize virtualization.

But airports and airlines that pursue virtualization options don't need to utilize CUPPS.

Further information on Virtualization

Search the internet for "airport common use virtualization."

