The concept of an airport city should not only be about infrastructure development and integration of various businesses and functions at and around the airport. While this remains important, it should also become a platform to embrace the rapid development of mobile and other technologies which has triggered a paradigm shift in the aviation industry, revolutionising the travel habits and behaviours of air passengers.

Hong Kong International Airport (HKIA) has been using and developing various technologies with the aim of providing passengers with a pleasant travel journey from kerbside to boarding gate, or even before they set foot in the airport. In the future, the Airport City of HKIA will offer even more technology-driven and personalised facilities and services that suit the tastes of a new generation of travellers. These facilities and services will be consistently and continuously reviewed to ensure that they are up-to-date.
Over the past few years, HKIA has employed the latest technology to elevate travellers’ airport experience. From document check to baggage drop-off, passengers can complete the entire check-in process using self-service facilities. Biometric scanners using facial recognition technology are deployed at checkpoints to verify identity, speeding up passenger flow and enhancing security.

In the future, the Airport City of HKIA will offer even more technology-driven and personalised facilities and services that suit the tastes of a new generation of travellers.

The Smart Airport City
Meanwhile, the airport’s free mobile app – HKG My Flight – has been continuously enhanced to help guide passengers throughout their journey at HKIA and deliver a more personalised airport experience. The app provides real-time flight information and boarding alerts, indoor wayfinding aids with augmented reality, airport parking booking, and in-app translation of airport signage into nine languages including French, Japanese, Korean, Spanish and more. More features will be rolled out in the near future, including booking of baggage pick-up service from outside the airport, provision of destination guides, checking on departures processing and waiting time, etc.

When the app is paired with MyTAG, the smart luggage tag developed by Airport Authority Hong Kong, it will notify arriving passengers when their baggage is ready to be collected at the baggage reclaim. The RFID-enabled MyTAG will be enhanced in the coming years to allow passengers to receive baggage arrival notifications when visiting other major airports.
Aviation development will be very much shaped by technology, as well as demand for seamless, personalised services. The future airport journey and business operations at HKIA will look very different from the way they do today:

**Flexible self-service processing**

HKIA has launched check-in service outside the airport at locations such as the Hong Kong Boundary Crossing Facilities, and the High Speed Rail Station. Very soon, checking in at the airport will become anachronistic for many. Processes like check-in and baggage delivery and pick-up can be done at many different venues outside the airport, such as theme parks, hotels, transport hubs, and exhibition centres, etc.

**Seamless validation and security**

Single token travel from check-in to boarding will be introduced. Using biometric technology such as facial recognition, the digital identity (or token) of the majority of passengers will be captured at the first point of identity or document verification. After that, they can walk straight through different checkpoints without having to show travel documents again.

**New retail experience**

By gaining deeper understanding of travellers’ needs, preferences and behaviours through big data analyses, tailored commercial experiences can be created to meet customers’ changing needs. With more efficient check-in and screening procedures in place, passengers will have ample time – and be in a relaxed mood – to enjoy HKIA’s rich variety of retail, dining, cultural and entertainment offerings.

Behind the scenes, more extensive use of artificial intelligence, data analyses and Internet of Things will streamline airport operations, enhancing operational efficiency and allowing more effective deployment of resources. In the next few years, the IT infrastructure of HKIA will be upgraded to support the growing demand on processing power, data storage, mobile connectivity, information sharing and transmission, which will include adoption of the latest technologies for Wi-Fi and 5G.

Automation and robotics such as driverless vehicles will be used to enhance operations and take up some of the manual work as the airport is getting busier.
Unique Airport Experience

In the future, competition amongst airports will hinge upon delivering the best experience for travellers. Striving to provide an unparalleled airport experience, HKIA is not only expanding its capacity, but also upgrading its terminals with a fresh and modern new look.

At Terminal 1 (T1), a total of 55,000 square metres of carpet and granite tiles were fitted, and the overall bandwidth of Wi-Fi service was boosted tenfold. The East Hall in the restricted area is being expanded to accommodate more recreational facilities, including a two-storey children’s play area with games and playground equipment, a dedicated zone featuring interactive entertainment facilities, and a new open-air green garden.
Meanwhile, the existing boarding gate areas will be transformed into various themed zones to spice up the terminal. Washrooms will be redesigned, and the food court in the East Hall will be revamped into a 24-hour gourmet hub – enhancing the dining ambience and offering a greater variety of cuisines. A wider selection of retailers, which goes beyond traditional travel retail categories, is being introduced, strengthening Hong Kong’s reputation as a shopping paradise.

When these projects are completed, T1 will sport a fresh new look and offer a novel experience. Together with the new airside passenger terminal and an expanded Terminal 2 supporting the Three-runway System, as well as SKYCITY, HKIA aims to present passengers with a brand new airport, in the exact same location.

Enhancing the passenger experience, the boarding gate areas will be transformed into different themed zones.

Striving to provide an unparalleled airport experience, HKIA is not only expanding its capacity, but also upgrading its terminals with a fresh and modern new look.