

Airline Baggage Recovery Technology: A Case of Apple's Share Item Location



Source: Pixabay (2014)

Background

Losing your luggage in the middle of a trip can be dreadful, as it interrupts your planned itinerary and affects your overall travel experience. The uncertainty of whether their luggage will ever be retrieved often leaves travelers feeling anxious and helpless. However, recent innovations in item tracking technology have made the recovery process much easier for both airlines and their passengers.

In November 2024, Apple introduced Share Item Location, a new iOS feature that enables users to securely share the location of an AirTag or Find My network accessory with third parties such as airlines (International Airport Review, 2025). This feature allows iPhone users to generate a Share Item Location link containing GPS data for AirTags in their luggage using the Find My app, which can then be shared with airlines to facilitate tracking and recovery of their missing luggage (ABC News, 2024).

Moreover, the feature's design emphasizes user privacy. While the shared link is set to expire automatically after seven days, it is possible for the owner to terminate the sharing at any time or once they have recovered their lost items (International Airport Review, 2025). Thus, the feature not only helps users retrieve their luggage more efficiently but also do so without having to worry that their privacy will be compromised after giving their locations to the airline.

As part of the iOS 18.2 software update, the feature is now available worldwide for users with iPhone Xs and later models (Apple, 2024). Eyeing the possibility of faster recovery of customers' missing luggage, more than 15 carriers, including Singapore Airlines, United Airlines, British Airways, and Lufthansa, have incorporated Apple's new Share Item Location compatibility features into their baggage recovery systems (Conde Nast Traveler, 2025).

Challenges

While the Share Item Location feature presents a significant advancement in luggage tracking technology, it faces notable challenges. Primarily, its availability is restricted to Apple users with iPhone Xs and later models, excluding a considerable number of travellers who utilize other smartphones, such as Android devices. Additionally, the feature's initial rollout is limited to a small

number of participating airlines, which may hinder its effectiveness and accessibility for many passengers. As such, the successful adoption of this innovation will require broader support from various airlines and increased inclusivity for users across different platforms.

Discussion Questions

1. Given the market price of HK\$239, would you consider purchasing an AirTag to make your luggage more secure? Why or why not?
2. What potential drawbacks could arise from the use of Share Item Location feature?
3. What factors might influence airlines' decision to adopt the Share Item Location feature?
4. What future advancements in item tracking technology could further enhance the process of luggage recovery, and how might these developments impact the travel industry?
5. How could the feature be improved to support travelers with multiple or connecting flights?

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Keywords

- Airlines
- AirTag
- Share Item Location
- Baggage recovery
- Privacy
- Information sharing