

POINT OF VIEW PAPER



The digital future of immigration

At Santa Fe Relocation we believe passionately about making Global Mobility easy. Easy for assignees and their families to use and understand and easier for employers and Global Mobility professionals to manage. We have designed our own digital immigration vision of the future which leverages the new digital schemes that governments around the world are introducing and which in time can help us provide relocations that are more intuitive to use, simpler to understand and ultimately easier for everyone involved.

Digital Immigration



Ferdinand Magellan was a Portuguese explorer who organised the Spanish expedition to the East Indies from 1519 to 1522, resulting in the first circumnavigation of the Earth, completed by Juan Sebastián Elcano.

He probably did not need a passport or a visa for his journey as neither existed back then, but he may have carried a 'safe conduct' document issued by the Portuguese Government. Imagine if, in a few years' time, he was to repeat his global circumnavigation with no compass, physical passport or visa either ... just a mobile phone.

Nowadays, international travel is more commonplace, more affordable and, in some respects, easier than ever before. But Governments continue to add hurdles through new and complex immigration and tax laws, visa regimes, pre-clearance and permission to travel schemes as they seek to deliver safer journeys and stronger border controls. Delays for visas and work permits and long queues at Immigration and Customs controls are commonplace around the world as more and more people seek to travel internationally.

Recognising that they need to find new ways to conduct their work, government authorities are turning to recent advances in technology to imagine a completely reformed way to manage immigration. And the technology today allows them to manage their businesses in a more effective and also more secure way. For many these objectives (effectiveness and security) are not always complimentary but I will set out how this may be achieved, with technology that is available today and, in many cases, already in use. One of the keys going forward is to start to link these disparate solutions into a single overarching customer journey and then to get governments around the world to take the leap to a new digital world of travel facilitation and enhanced security.

Imagine if...

You could travel the world with no physical passport or visas and being allowed to board your plane, ship, train, whilst remaining fully compliant with the myriad of immigration and tax laws that exist around the world. Imagine governments being happy to support this by building the infrastructure to support it because it made their own country both more secure and also more accessible to high value, low risk travellers like you and Ferdinand Magellan. Imagine being able to store everything you need to prove who you are, where you are coming from and all the information to allow you complete customs declarations digitally with your mobile phone.

For illustrative purposes we will look at a digital immigration journey.

Digital journey example

After a discussion with his manager and Global Mobility department, Alex decides that he will accept a three-year posting to Hong Kong. The first thing he wishes to do is to arrange a visit to Hong Kong with his wife Amélie. He asks his digital assistant SaFeRelo to book tickets for the following week to Hong Kong. SaFeRelo asks how long they will be staying there and what the purpose of their visit is. Santa Fe books their tickets and advises them that they do not need a visa for a trip of this nature. Santa Fe also books an appointment for Alex and Amélie with a Destination Services Provider in Hong Kong to help them identify a suitable place to live there.

Alexis and Siri check in online the night before their journey and on arrival at Paris Charles de Gaulle airport the following morning go straight to the lounge using their smart phones to pass through the various checkpoints. They later arrive in Hong Kong and approach an e-Gate where they present their mobile phones to a reader on the gate which identifies them as French citizens who are visiting for a week. The e-Gates do the other automated checks required by the Hong Kong authorities and open to allow Alexis and Siri to enter Hong Kong. Having collected their bags they then proceed to customs where they scan their phones to provide their customs declarations which they completed during their flight using the e-Travel App on their smart phone.

10 days later, after they have returned to France, they confirm their move to Hong Kong. They ask their digital assistant SaFeRelo to arrange the necessary visas and work permits for them to spend three years working in Hong Kong. As SaFeRelo already knows all their key details it submits a digital visa and work permit application for a two-year period (the maximum allowed in Hong Kong on first application) with all the supporting information (digital passport, academic qualifications, CV, employment letter etc.) to the Hong Kong Immigration Department in Hong Kong together with their facial biometrics which are stored on their file. Once they arrive in Hong Kong their SaFeRelo App will remind them and help them apply for a Hong Kong ID card which all Hong Kong long term residents are required to have and which can be stored as a digital ID on their phone.

Three months before the two-year visa expires, the App asks if they're planning on staying to complete the three years, or for longer, and applies for the extension on their behalf.

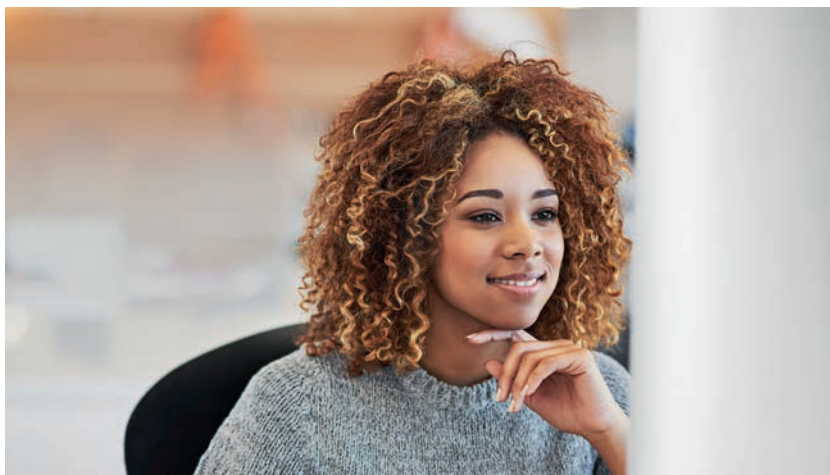
Digital travel

This is perhaps not such a far away dream as you might think, and the technology already exists to deliver this new way of digital Immigration control.

We have set out below and on the following pages both the design principals and main technical components of such an approach and show how, knitted together, they can deliver a digital solution that Ferdinand Magellan would not have even dreamed of.

Design principles

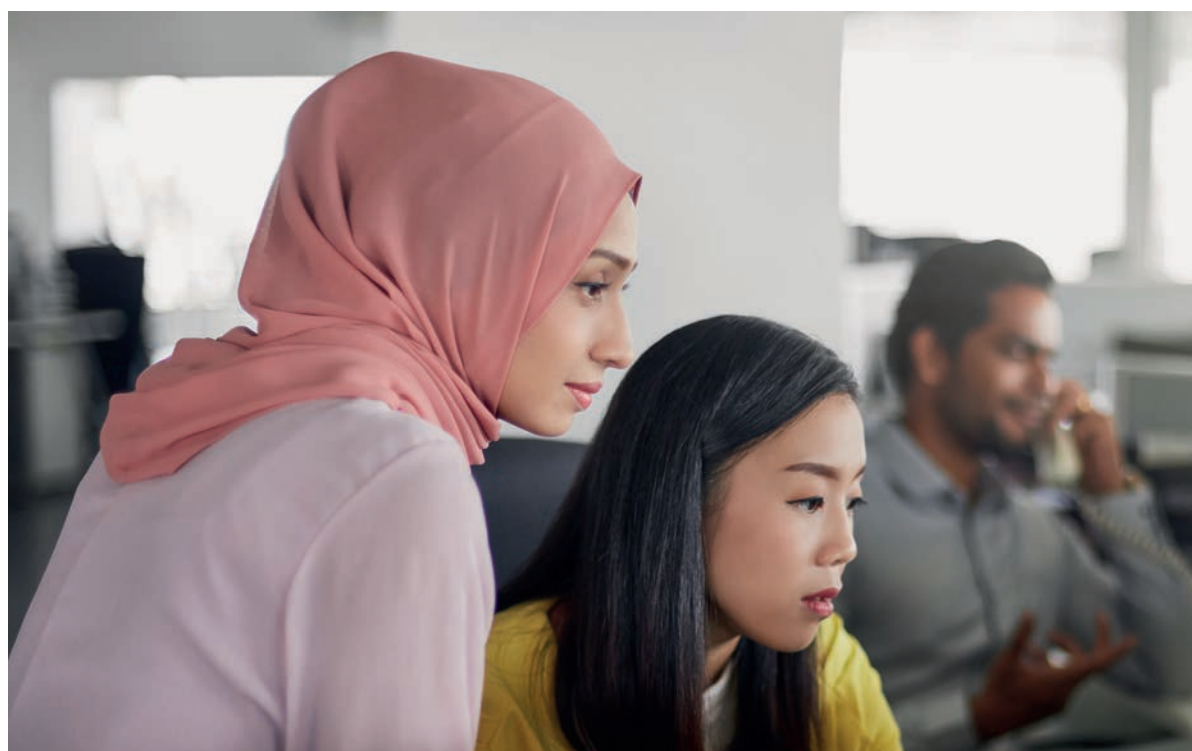
Understand user needs.	Designers should do user research to discover the needs of people who use immigrant visa services, and the ways the service fits into their lives. We also need to look at government agencies as “users” of their own processes and ask for insights about what could be improved. This invaluable data will inform technical and design decisions to better our system from the inside out.
Address the whole experience, from start to finish.	We hear time and time again from users that they are often overwhelmed by the multiple agencies that play a role in processing their immigration application. Our goal is to minimize confusion for the user, streamline the adjudication process, and reduce redundancy. We also see examples of where the failure to share data within a government agency can lead to the same decisions being made repeatedly rather than made once and used on multiple occasions.
Make the process clear, simple, and intuitive, so that users succeed.	It is necessary to make our process as clear and simple as possible so that individuals understand the process, are fully prepared when they make their request, and can apply for and secure the immigration benefit for which they qualify.
Use the same language and design patterns when building digital services.	Consistent design patterns help users become familiar with the services offered. An applicant shouldn't feel like they're submitting multiple forms to multiple agencies and players and should feel secure that their forms are received, will be processed efficiently and securely.



Digital travel (continued)

Technical components

Digital passport	<p>The Mobile Passport App enables US passport holders and Canadian visitors to submit their passport and declaration information to US Customs and Border Protection (CBP) via their mobile device instead of completing the traditional paper form, then access separate, expedited Mobile Passport lanes in the Federal inspection area. The App does not require pre-approval.</p> <p>Mobile Passport plus provides even greater convenience with a digital scanner and secure storage of passports in preparation for your next trip. For international travel on private aircraft, Mobile Passport allows US citizens and international visitors travelling to or from the US—who have received a trip locator and invitation from the pilot—to share passport and travel info with the pilot prior to the flight.</p>
e-Passport	<p>An e-Passport is a traditional passport that has an embedded electronic microprocessor chip which contains biometric information that can be used to authenticate the identity of the passport holder. It uses contactless smart card technology, including a microprocessor chip (computer chip) and antenna (for both power to the chip and communication) embedded in the front or back cover, or centre page, of the passport.</p> <p>One of the advantages of e-Passports for holders is that they enable the bearer to make use of automated 'e-Gates' where they are available thus reducing the time people spend queuing for immigration/passport control.</p>
Personal data	<p>All your key personal travel data remains stored on appropriate existing files that can give access to the SaFeRelo App which can extract the required personal data so that visa applications could be made automatically on e-Forms once you decided to make a trip.</p>



e-visa	An e-visa is an alternative to paper visas placed in passports and issued at missions/consulates and at the ports of entry. There is no global visa and Immigration organisation that brings harmonisation/standardisation in this field so each country who issues e-visas have their own ways of operating.
Remote biometric registration	A method and system provided to provide enrolment of biometric data from individuals without the need for the enrollees to travel to a central location. The system and method provide for optionally detecting multiple types of biometric data, for example, fingerprints, facial scan, visual scan, iris scan, voice scan, or the like, to be captured at the point of enrollee use. Such a system has been deployed recently by the UK Government to help process EU nationals seeking permanent residence in the UK.
Blockchain—multilevel ID, document validity and status verification	If you have a biometric ‘chipped’ passport, you can use the automated e-Passport gates instead of having your passport checked by a border guard. This means you can avoid the queues and get through passport control more quickly.
Personal data	A blockchain, originally block chain, is a growing list of records, called blocks, which are linked using cryptography. Each block contains a cryptographic hash of the previous block, a timestamp, and transaction data. By design, a blockchain is resistant to modification of the data.
Business Travel Tool	Apps that allow tracking of business travellers and allows travellers to check visa and tax requirements prior to travel, keeps track of their continued compliance while they are travelling and provides a record of their travel over the course of a year for end of year reporting.

Put it all together and you have a completely digital travel/Immigration solution. Join us on our digital journey by speaking to one of our team. Search “**Santa Fe Corporate Immigration**”.

About the author

Peter Graham, Director of Visa and Immigration Services, Santa Fe Relocation

Now in his 30th year working in the field of Immigration, Peter’s career spans both government and private sector work. Peter spent 17 years at the UK Home Office working in both national and international immigration policy and strategy where he had the opportunity to work in every stage of the Immigration lifecycle.

Peter joined Santa Fe in March 2017 after having spent the previous 10 years leading IBM’s Global Border and Immigration business. A recognised thought leader and regular speaker on Border and Immigration matters, Peter included among his clients the World Economic Forum, Interpol, Department of Homeland Security, Australia Customs, the Irish Medicines Board and the UK Home Office.



**We enable people and organisations
to work, live and thrive in new places
around the world.**

About Santa Fe Relocation

Santa Fe Relocation is a Global Mobility company specialising in managing and delivering high-quality relocation services worldwide. Our core competence is providing services that help corporations and their employees as well as individuals and their families to relocate and settle in new places. These services are delivered to a consistently high standard, locally and globally, and managed through our own operations around the world. For more information, visit us at [santaferelo.com](https://www.santaferelo.com)

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We make it easy