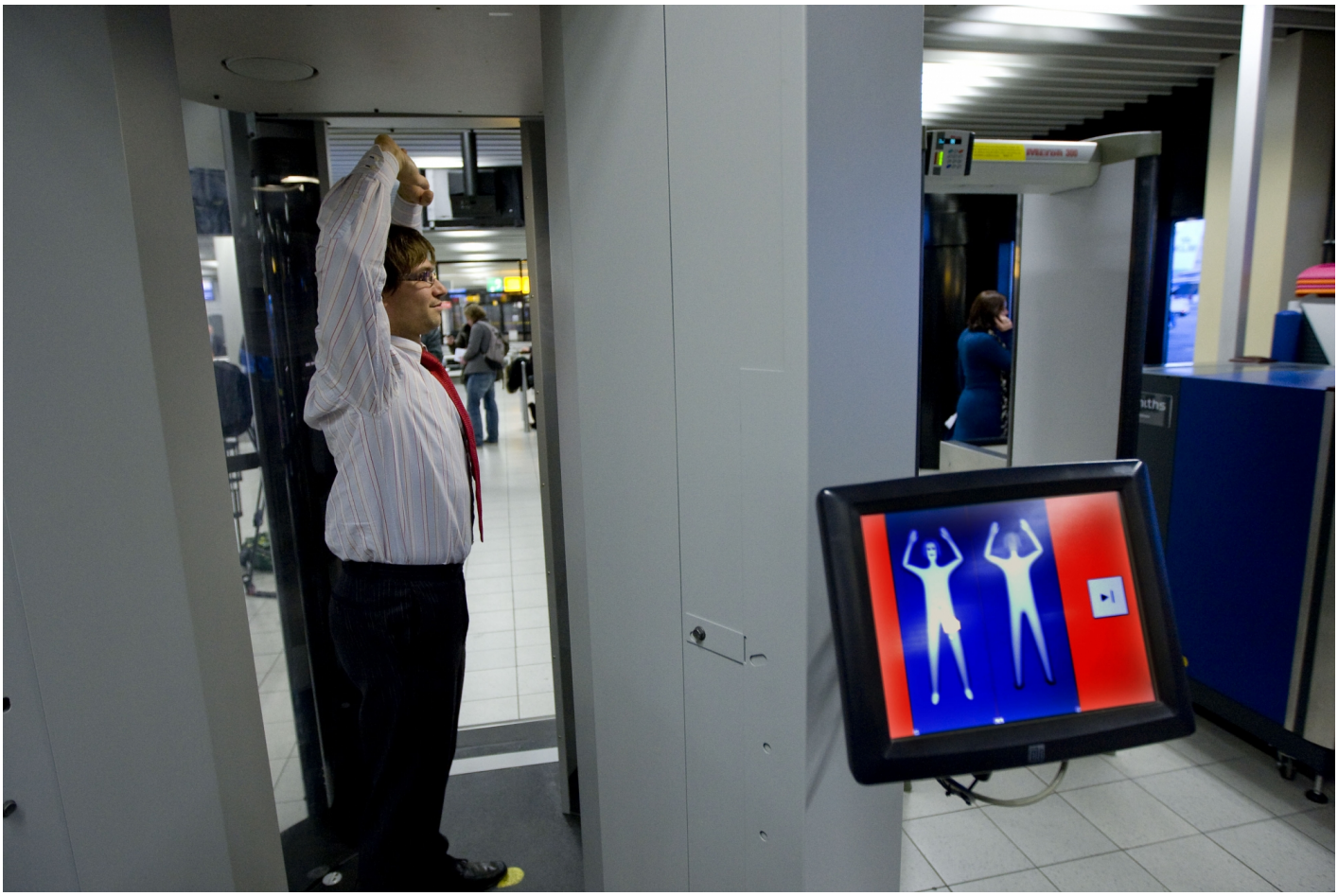
THE NEXT GENERATION OF AIRPORT SCANNERS EXAMINES CROWDS FROM 50 FEET AWAY

News / Airports / Routes



When it comes to security technology, it's clear we are on the precipice of something new and completely transformational. Just a few short years after protesting body scanner deployment in airports for being too invasive, we now excitedly volunteer scans of our fingerprints and irises in the name of shorter lines. So what's next for airport security?

The TSA recently unveiled its newest equipment at London's Defense and Security Equipment International (DSEI) exhibition. The SPO-NX is a new scanner for densely populated areas like airports, train stations, or even sports stadiums. Capable of passive scanning, unlike the whirring and buzzing gray frames we are accustomed to walking through at security checkpoints, the SPO-NX scans entire groups of people, from as far as 50 feet away.

The next-gen scanner emits zero radiation -- take that, backscatter! -- and instead uses passive millimeter wave body scanning to sense and detect energy emitted from individuals and the objects they may be carrying. Rather than being positioned at bottleneck check points, the SPO-NX can be operated from within walls and ceilings. This is in line with TSA Director Peter Neffenger's recent remarks about the checkpoint of the future being more of a passively scanned

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hallway than a snaking single file line, and the TSA hopes it will increase both efficiency and speed of security checkpoints.

U.K.-based security specialists QinetiQ developed the SPO-NX with a US$2.86 Million federal grant. When fully deployed, the system is intended to replace existing SPO-7R machines holding up lines in airports across the country today.

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