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Contact: Dave Smallen
Tel.: (202) 366-5568

December 2006 Airline Traffic Data: 2006 System Traffic Up 0.8 Percent From 2005

U.S. airlines carried 744.4 million scheduled domestic and international passengers on their systems in 2006, 0.8 percent more than they did in 2005, the U.S. Department of Transportation's Bureau of Transportation Statistics (BTS) today reported in a release of preliminary data (Table 1).

BTS, a part of DOT's Research and Innovative Technology Administration, reported that U.S. airlines carried about the same number of domestic passengers and 6.0 percent more international passengers in 2006 than in 2005 (Tables 7, 13). These passengers traveled on planes with average load factors exceeding 79 percent (Tables 1, 7 and 13).

In December, the most recent month, U.S. airlines carried 60.7 million scheduled domestic and international passengers, 1.9 percent more than in December 2005 (Table 2). The number of domestic passengers increased 1.2 percent in December from a year earlier and international passengers increased 7.3 percent (Tables 7, 13).

Top Airlines in 2006

American Airlines carried more total system passengers in 2006 than any other airline for the fifth consecutive year (Table 3); Southwest Airlines carried more domestic passengers than any other airline for the third consecutive year (Table 9); and American Airlines carried more international passengers than any U.S. carrier for the 17th consecutive year (Table 15).

Top Airports in 2006

More total system and domestic passengers boarded planes in 2006 at Atlanta Hartsfield-Jackson International than at any other U.S. airport for the 11th consecutive year (Tables 5 and 11); more international passengers boarded planes at Miami International than at any other U.S. airport for the 12th consecutive year (Table 17).

Flights Operated

U.S. carriers operated 10.5 million domestic and international flights in 2006, 2.8 percent fewer than were operated in 2005 (Table 1). Domestic flights were down 3.3 percent from the previous year while international flights were up 3.1 percent (Tables 7, 13).

In December, U.S. airlines operated 869,700 scheduled domestic and international flights, unchanged from the number of flights operated in December 2005 (Table 1). The number of domestic flights declined 0.5 percent in December from a year earlier while international flights increased 5.3 percent (Tables 7, 13).

America West Airlines and US Airways report traffic data separately because the carriers hold two operating certificates despite the merged business operations. They will file a merged traffic report when they operate under a single certificate.

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System Comparisons (Table 1-6)

In other total system comparisons from 2005 to 2006 and from December 2005 to December 2006 (Table 1):

Revenue passenger miles (RPMs), a measure of the number of passengers and the distance flown, were up 2.4 percent in 2006. In December, RPMs were up 3.0 percent.

Available seat-miles (ASMs), a measure of airline capacity using the number of seats and the distance flown, were up 0.3 percent in 2006. In December, ASMs were up 2.1 percent.

Passenger load factor, passenger miles as a proportion of available seat-miles, was up 1.6 load factor points to 79.2 percent in 2006. In December, load factor was up 0.8 load factor points to 77.0 percent.

Flight stage length, the average non-stop distance flown per departure, was up 2.6 percent in 2006. In December, flight stage length was up 1.4 percent.

Passenger trip length, the average distance flown per passenger, was up 1.6 percent in 2006. In December, passenger trip length was up 1.1 percent.

Among U.S. airlines, American Airlines carried 98.1 million passengers on its system in 2006, the most of any airline (Table 3). In December, American Airlines carried 8.1 million passengers on its system (Table 4).

Among airports, Atlanta Hartsfield-Jackson International was the busiest U.S. airport in 2006, with 40.7 million domestic and international passenger boardings (Table 5). In December, Atlanta Hartsfield-Jackson International was the busiest U.S. airport with 3.4 million domestic and international passenger boardings on U. S. carriers (Table 6).

Domestic Air Travel (Tables 7-12)

U.S. airlines carried 658.2 million scheduled domestic passengers in 2006, up 0.1 percent from 657.3 million carried in 2005 (Table 8). The passengers were carried on 9.7 million flights, down 3.3 percent from the 10.0 million flights operated in 2005 (Table 7).

In the most recent month, December, the airlines carried 53.5 million scheduled domestic passengers, up 1.2 percent from the 52.8 million carried during December 2005 (Table 8). The passengers were carried on 798,100 flights, down 0.5 percent from the 802,100 flights operated in December 2005 (Table 7).

In other domestic comparisons from 2005 to 2006 and from December 2005 to December 2006 (Table 7):

Domestic revenue passenger miles (RPMs), a measure of the number of passengers and the distance flown, were up 0.9 percent in 2006. In December, domestic RPMs were up 1.4 percent.

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Domestic available seat-miles (ASMs), a measure of airline capacity using the number of seats and the distance flown, were down 1.5 percent in 2006. In December, domestic ASMs were up 0.4 percent.

Domestic passenger load factor, passenger miles as a proportion of available seat-miles, was up 2.0 load factor points to 79.2 percent in 2006. In December, domestic load factor was up 0.7 load factor points to 76.6 percent.

Domestic flight stage length, the average non-stop distance flown per departure, was up 1.7 percent in 2006. In December, domestic flight stage length was up 0.5 percent.

Domestic passenger trip length, the average distance flown per passenger, was up 0.8 percent in 2006. In December, domestic passenger trip length was up 0.1 percent.

Southwest Airlines carried 96.3 million domestic passengers in 2006, the most of any airline (Table 9). In December, Southwest carried 7.9 million domestic passengers, the most of any airline (Table 10).

Atlanta Hartsfield-Jackson International was the busiest domestic airport in 2006, with 37.1 million domestic passenger boardings (Table 11). In December, Atlanta Hartsfield-Jackson was the busiest domestic airport with 3.0 million domestic passenger boardings (Table 12).

International Air Travel (Tables 13-18)

U.S. airlines carried 86.2 million scheduled international passengers in 2006, up 6.0 percent from the 81.3 million carried in 2005 (Table 14). The passengers were carried on 849,900 flights, up 3.1 percent from the 824,300 flights operated in 2005 (Table 13).

In the most recent month, December, the airlines carried 7.2 million international passengers, up 7.3 percent from the 6.7 million carried during December 2005. The passengers were carried on 71,600 flights, up 5.3 percent from the 68,000 flights operated in December 2005 (Table 13).

In other international comparisons from 2005 to 2006 and from December 2005 to December 2006 (Table 13):

International revenue passenger miles (RPMs), a measure of the number of passengers and the distance flown, were up 6.3 percent in 2006. In December, international RPMs were up 7.6 percent.

International available seat-miles (ASMs), a measure of airline capacity using the number of seats and the distance flown, were up 5.4 percent in 2006. In December, international ASMs were up 6.6 percent.

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International passenger load factor, passenger miles as a proportion of available seat-miles, was up 0.6 load factor points to 79.4 in 2006. In December, international load factor was up 0.7 load factor points to 78.0.

International flight stage length, the average non-stop distance flown per departure, was up 2.7 percent in 2006. In December, international flight stage length was up 2.0 percent.

International passenger trip length, the average distance flown per passenger was up 0.2 percent in 2006. In December, international passenger trip length was down 0.2 percent.

American Airlines carried 21.4 million international passengers in 2006, the most of any U.S. airline (Table 15). In December, American carried 1.8 million international passengers, the most of any U.S. airline (Table 16).

Miami International was the busiest U.S. airport for international travel on U.S. carriers in 2006, with 4.5 million international passenger boardings (Table 17). In December, Miami International was the busiest international airport with 424,900 international passenger boardings (Table 18).

Reporting Notes

Data are compiled from monthly reports filed with BTS by commercial U.S. air carriers detailing operations, passenger traffic and freight traffic. This release includes data received by BTS from 92 carriers as of March 7 for U.S. carrier **scheduled** civilian operations. U.S. carriers' foreign point-to-point flights are included in system and international totals. To create a customized table for passengers, flights, RPMs, ASMs and other data, including non-scheduled service, go to http://www.bts.gov/programs/airline_information/air_carrier_traffic_statistics/.

Additional traffic numbers are available on the BTS website at TranStats, the Intermodal Transportation Database, at <http://transtats.bts.gov>. Click on "Aviation." For domestic and international passengers, RPMs and ASMs by carrier and carrier region through December, click on "Air Carrier Summary Data (Form 41 and 298C Summary Data)," and then click on "Schedule T-1."

For domestic numbers through December and international numbers through September by origin as well as by carrier and region, after clicking on "Aviation," click on "Air Carrier Statistics (Form 41 Traffic)." Click on "T-100 Market" for system passenger numbers, "T-100 Domestic Market" for domestic or "T-100 International Market" for international. For flights, stage length and trip length, use the appropriate T-100 Segment database.

TranStats system and international totals do not include U.S. carriers' foreign point-to-point flights. For December, U.S. carriers reported 276,142 foreign point-to-point passengers. For 2006, U.S. carriers reported 3,605,454 foreign point-to-point passengers.

Data are subject to revision. BTS has scheduled April 12 for the release of January traffic data.

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Table 1. Scheduled System (Domestic and International) Airline Travel on U.S. Carriers

	Dec 2005	Monthly Dec 2006	Change %	2005	Annual 2006	Change %
Passengers (in millions)	59.5	60.6	1.9	738.6	744.4	0.8
Flights (in thousands)	870.1	869.7	0.0	10,858.0	10,548.7	-2.8
Revenue Passenger Miles(in billions)	63.2	65.1	3.0	779.0	797.4	2.4
Available Seat-Miles(in billions)	82.9	84.6	2.1	1,003.3	1,006.4	0.3
Load Factor*	76.2	77.0	0.8	77.6	79.2	1.6
Flight Stage Length**	697.9	707.5	1.4	680.2	697.9	2.6
Passenger Trip Length***	1,062.4	1,074.2	1.1	1,054.7	1,071.1	1.6

Source: Bureau of Transportation Statistics, T-100 Market and Segment

*Change in load factor points

**The average non-stop distance flown per departure in miles

*** The average distance flown per passenger in miles

Note: Percentage changes based on numbers prior to rounding.

Table 2. Total System (Domestic and International) Scheduled Enplanements on U.S. Carriers

Passenger numbers in millions (000,000)

Month	2004	2005	2004-2005 Pct. Change	2006	2005-2006 Pct. Change
January	49.4	54.4	10.2	55.6	2.1
February	50.5	52.9	4.6	53.4	0.9
March	60.3	66.1	9.7	65.8	-0.4
April	59.2	61.6	4.0	63.2	2.6
May	59.1	64.2	8.6	64.5	0.4
June	63.6	67.1	5.5	67.2	0.1
July	67.1	70.6	5.2	69.5	-1.5
August	64.7	66.8	3.4	66.5	-0.5
September	53.3	56.8	6.5	56.3	-0.8
October	60.1	59.9	-0.3	61.6	2.9
November	57.4	58.7	2.2	60.2	2.6
December	59.0	59.5	0.9	60.7	1.9
Yr. Total	703.7	738.6	5.0	744.4	0.8

Source: Bureau of Transportation Statistics, T-100 Market

Note: Percentage changes based on numbers prior to rounding.

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**AIRLINE TRAFFIC PRESS RELEASE
ADD FIVE**

Table 3. Top 10 U.S. Airlines, ranked by 2006 System* Scheduled Enplanements
Passenger numbers in millions (000,000)

2006 Rank	Carrier	2006 Enplaned Passengers	2005 Rank	2005 Enplaned Passengers
1	American	98.1	1	98.0
2	Southwest	96.3	2	88.4
3	Delta	73.5	3	86.0
4	United	69.3	4	66.7
5	Northwest	54.8	5	56.5
6	Continental	46.7	6	42.8
7	US Airways	36.5	7	41.9
8	America West	21.2	8	22.1
9	AirTran	20.0	11	16.6
10	SkyWest	19.5	12	16.6

Source: Bureau of Transportation Statistics, T-100 Market

* System equals domestic plus international

Note: Percentage changes based on numbers prior to rounding.

Table 4. Top 10 U.S. Airlines, ranked by December 2006 System* Scheduled Enplanements

Passenger numbers in millions (000,000)

December 2006 Rank	Carrier	December 2006 Enplaned Passengers	December 2005 Rank	December 2005 Enplaned Passengers
1	American	8.1	1	8.2
2	Southwest	7.9	2	7.3
3	Delta	6.0	3	6.2
4	United	5.4	4	5.6
5	Northwest	4.5	5	4.3
6	Continental	4.0	6	3.8
7	US Airways	2.9	7	2.8
8	AirTran	1.8	9	1.5
9	JetBlue	1.7	13	1.4
10	America West	1.7	8	1.8

Source: Bureau of Transportation Statistics, T-100 Market

* System equals domestic plus international

Note: Percentage changes based on numbers prior to rounding.

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Table 5. Top 10 U.S. Airports, ranked by 2006 System* Scheduled Enplanements
 Passenger numbers in millions (000,000)

2006 Rank	Airport	2006 Enplaned Passengers	2005 Rank	2005 Enplaned Passengers
1	Atlanta	40.7	1	41.5
2	Chicago O'Hare	34.4	2	34.4
3	Dallas - Fort Worth	28.2	3	27.6
4	Los Angeles International	23.1	4	22.9
5	Denver	22.4	5	20.4
6	Las Vegas	20.9	6	20.3
7	Phoenix	20.3	7	20.1
8	Houston Bush	19.8	8	18.4
9	Detroit Metro	17.2	10	17.2
10	Minneapolis - St Paul	17.0	9	17.7

Source: Bureau of Transportation Statistics, T-100 Market

* System equals domestic plus international

Note: Percentage changes based on numbers prior to rounding.

Table 6. Top 10 U.S. Airports ranked by December 2006 System* Scheduled Enplanements
 Passenger numbers in millions (000,000)

December 2006 Rank	Airport	December 2006 Enplaned Passengers	December 2005 Rank	December 2005 Enplaned Passengers
1	Atlanta	3.4	1	3.3
2	Chicago O'Hare	2.7	2	2.8
3	Dallas-Fort Worth	2.3	3	2.3
4	Los Angeles International	2.0	4	1.9
5	Houston Bush	1.7	7	1.6
6	Las Vegas	1.7	8	1.6
7	Phoenix	1.6	6	1.7
8	Denver	1.6	5	1.7
9	Detroit Metro	1.4	10	1.4
10	Minneapolis - St Paul	1.4	9	1.4

Source: Bureau of Transportation Statistics, T-100 Market

* System equals domestic plus international

Note: Percentage changes based on numbers prior to rounding.

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Table 7. Domestic Scheduled Airline Travel on U.S. Carriers

	Monthly			Annual		
	Dec 2005	Dec 2006	Change %	2005	2006	Change %
Passengers (in millions)	52.8	53.5	1.2	657.3	658.2	0.1
Flights (in thousands)	802.1	798.1	-0.5	10,033.7	9,698.8	-3.3
Revenue Passenger Miles(in billions)	46.2	46.8	1.4	569.3	574.5	0.9
Available Seat-Miles(in billions)	60.9	61.1	0.4	737.1	725.8	-1.5
Load Factor*	75.9	76.6	0.7	77.2	79.2	2.0
Flight Stage Length**	621.4	624.6	0.5	604.8	615.3	1.7
Passenger Trip Length***	874.7	876.0	0.1	866.0	872.8	0.8

Source: Bureau of Transportation Statistics, T-100 Domestic Market and Segment

*Change in load factor points

**The average non-stop distance flown per departure in miles

*** The average distance flown per passenger in miles

Note: Percentage changes based on numbers prior to rounding.

Table 8. Domestic Scheduled Enplanements on U.S. Carriers
Passenger numbers in millions (000,000)

Month	2004	2005	2004-	2006	2005-2006
			2005 Pct. Change		Pct. Change
January	43.8	48.0	9.5	48.9	1.8
February	45.3	47.1	3.9	47.4	0.6
March	54.2	58.8	8.7	58.3	-0.9
April	53.3	54.9	3.1	55.8	1.7
May	53.0	57.3	8.1	57.2	-0.3
June	57.0	59.7	4.9	59.3	-0.8
July	59.6	62.4	4.7	60.8	-2.5
August	57.4	59.1	3.0	58.3	-1.4
September	47.7	50.6	6.1	50.0	-1.3
October	54.2	53.7	-0.8	55.1	2.5
November	51.8	52.8	1.9	53.8	2.0
December	52.6	52.8	0.3	53.5	1.2
Yr. Total	629.8	657.3	4.4	658.2	0.1

Source: Bureau of Transportation Statistics, T-100 Domestic Market

Note: Percentage changes based on numbers prior to rounding.

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**AIRLINE TRAFFIC PRESS RELEASE
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Table 9. Top 10 U.S. Airlines, ranked by 2006 Domestic Scheduled Enplanements
Passenger numbers in millions (000,000)

2006 Rank	Carrier	2006 Enplanements	2005 Rank	2005 Enplanements
1	Southwest	96.3	1	88.4
2	American	76.8	3	77.3
3	Delta	63.4	2	77.5
4	United	57.2	4	55.2
5	Northwest	45.1	5	46.7
6	Continental	35.8	7	33.0
7	US Airways	31.9	6	37.0
8	AirTran	20.0	10	16.5
9	America West	19.9	8	20.9
10	SkyWest	18.7	11	16.0

Source: Bureau of Transportation Statistics, T-100 Domestic Market
Note: Percentage changes based on numbers prior to rounding.

Table 10. Top 10 U.S. Airlines, ranked by December 2006 Domestic Scheduled Enplanements
Passenger numbers in millions (000,000)

December 2006 Rank	Carrier	December 2006 Enplanements	December 2005 Rank	December 2005 Enplanements
1	Southwest	7.9	1	7.3
2	American	6.3	2	6.4
3	Delta	5.1	3	5.5
4	United	4.5	4	4.6
5	Northwest	3.8	5	3.5
6	Continental	3.1	6	2.9
7	US Airways	2.6	7	2.5
8	AirTran	1.8	9	1.5
9	JetBlue	1.7	11	1.4
10	America West	1.6	8	1.7

Source: Bureau of Transportation Statistics, T-100 Domestic Market
Note: Percentage changes based on numbers prior to rounding.

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Table 11. Top 10 U.S. Airports, ranked by 2006 Domestic Scheduled Enplanements
 Passenger numbers in millions (000,000)

2006 Rank	Airport	2006 Enplanements	2005 Rank	2005 Enplanements
1	Atlanta	37.1	1	38.6
2	Chicago O'Hare	31.1	2	31.3
3	Dallas - Fort Worth	26.0	3	25.5
4	Denver	21.8	6	19.9
5	Los Angeles International	21.3	4	21.2
6	Las Vegas	20.7	5	20.1
7	Phoenix	19.7	7	19.4
8	Houston Bush	16.9	9	15.7
9	Minneapolis - St Paul	15.9	8	16.6
10	Orlando	15.7	11	15.5

Source: Bureau of Transportation Statistics, T-100 Domestic Market

Note: Percentage changes based on numbers prior to rounding.

Table 12. Top 10 U.S. Airports, ranked by December 2006 Domestic Scheduled Enplanements

Passenger numbers in millions (000,000)

December 2006 Rank	Airport	December 2006 Enplanements	December 2005 Rank	December 2005 Enplanements
1	Atlanta	3.0	1	3.1
2	Chicago O'Hare	2.4	2	2.5
3	Dallas - Fort Worth	2.1	3	2.2
4	Los Angeles International	1.8	4	1.7
5	Las Vegas	1.7	7	1.6
6	Phoenix	1.6	6	1.6
7	Denver	1.6	5	1.6
8	Houston Bush	1.4	8	1.4
9	Minneapolis - St Paul	1.3	9	1.3
10	Detroit Metro	1.3	11	1.2

Source: Bureau of Transportation Statistics, T-100 Domestic Market

Note: Percentage changes based on numbers prior to rounding.

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Table 13: International Scheduled Airline Travel on U.S. Carriers

	Monthly			Annual		
	Dec 2005	Dec 2006	Change %	2005	2006	Change %
Passengers (in millions)	6.7	7.2	7.3	81.3	86.2	6.0
Flights (in thousands)	68.0	71.6	5.3	824.3	849.9	3.1
Revenue Passenger-Miles(in billions)	17.0	18.3	7.6	209.8	222.9	6.3
Available Seat-Miles(in billions)	22.0	23.5	6.6	266.2	280.6	5.4
Load Factor*	77.3	78.0	0.7	78.8	79.4	0.6
Flight Stage Length**	1,600.9	1,632.8	2.0	1,597.8	1,640.2	2.7
Passenger Trip Length***	2,541.7	2,547.7	0.2	2,579.8	2,585.1	0.2

Source: Bureau of Transportation Statistics, T-100 International Market and Segment

*Change in load factor points

**The average non-stop distance flown per departure in miles

*** The average distance flown per passenger in miles

Note: Percentage changes based on numbers prior to rounding.

Table 14 International Scheduled Enplanements on U.S. Carriers
Passenger numbers in millions (000,000)

Month	2004	2005	2004-2005		2005-2006
			Pct. Change	2006	Pct. Change
January	5.6	6.5	16.0	6.7	3.9
February	5.2	5.8	10.8	6.0	3.8
March	6.1	7.3	18.8	7.6	4.0
April	5.9	6.8	12.0	7.3	7.9
May	6.1	6.9	13.4	7.3	6.5
June	6.7	7.4	10.9	7.9	7.0
July	7.5	8.2	9.3	8.7	6.0
August	7.3	7.7	6.0	8.2	5.8
September	5.7	6.2	9.7	6.4	2.8
October	5.9	6.2	4.5	6.6	6.4
November	5.7	5.9	4.9	6.4	8.4
December	6.3	6.7	5.8	7.2	7.3
Yr. Total	73.9	81.5	10.1	86.2	6.0

Source: Bureau of Transportation Statistics, T-100 International Market

Note: Percentage changes based on numbers prior to rounding.

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Table 15. Top 10 U.S. Airlines, ranked by 2006 International Scheduled Enplanements

Passenger numbers in millions (000,000)

2006 Rank	Carrier	2006 Enplanements	2005 Rank	2005 Enplanements
1	American	21.4	1	20.8
2	United	12.1	2	11.6
3	Continental	11.0	3	9.8
4	Delta	10.1	5	8.5
5	Northwest	9.7	4	9.8
6	US Airways	4.6	6	4.8
7	Alaska	2.3	7	2.2
8	ExpressJet	1.9	8	1.8
9	Executive	1.8	9	1.7
10	Continental Micronesia	1.3	10	1.3

Source: Bureau of Transportation Statistics, T-100 International Market
 Note: Percentage changes based on numbers prior to rounding.

Table 16. Top 10 U.S. Airlines, ranked by December 2006 International Scheduled Enplanements

Passenger numbers in millions (000,000)

December 2006 Rank	Carrier	December 2006 Enplanements	December 2005 Rank	December 2005 Enplanements
1	American	1.8	1	1.8
2	United	1.0	2	1.0
3	Continental	0.9	3	0.8
4	Delta	0.9	5	0.7
5	Northwest	0.8	4	0.7
6	US Airways	0.3	6	0.3
7	Alaska	0.2	7	0.2
8	ExpressJet	0.2	8	0.2
9	Executive	0.1	9	0.1
10	America West	0.1	10	0.1

Source: Bureau of Transportation Statistics, T-100 International Market
 Note: Percentage changes based on numbers prior to rounding.

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Table 17. Top 10 U.S. Airports, ranked by 2006 International Scheduled Enplanements

Passenger numbers in thousands (000)

2006 Rank	Airport	2006 Enplanements	2005 Rank	2005 Enplanements
1	Miami	4,481.8	1	4,226.2
2	New York - JFK	3,584.0	2	3,473.4
3	Atlanta	3,572.2	5	2,885.6
4	Newark	3,414.3	4	2,988.9
5	Chicago O'Hare	3,309.3	3	3,108.0
6	Houston Bush	2,933.5	6	2,701.0
7	Dallas - Fort Worth	2,209.6	7	2,115.4
8	Los Angeles International	1,779.5	8	1,724.4
9	San Francisco	1,721.7	9	1,652.9
10	Detroit Metro	1,616.8	10	1,620.5

Source: Bureau of Transportation Statistics, T-100 International Market

Note: Percentage changes based on numbers prior to rounding.

Table 18. Top 10 U.S. Airports, ranked by December 2006 International Scheduled Enplanements

Passenger numbers in thousands (000)

December 2006 Rank	Airport	December 2006 Enplanements	December 2005 Rank	December 2005 Enplanements
1	Miami	424.9	1	416.3
2	Atlanta	336.1	3	279.8
3	New York - JFK	330.1	2	291.7
4	Newark	294.6	5	253.6
5	Houston Bush	273.9	4	261.0
6	Chicago O'Hare	273.4	6	250.3
7	Dallas - Fort Worth	186.9	7	190.8
8	Los Angeles International	171.1	8	153.6
9	San Francisco	154.0	9	142.2
10	Detroit Metro	129.2	10	125.8

Source: Bureau of Transportation Statistics, T-100 International Market

Note: Percentage changes based on numbers prior to rounding.