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Summary 2008 Traffic Data for U.S and Foreign Airlines: Total Passengers Down 3.5 Percent from 2007

The number of scheduled domestic and international passengers on U.S. airlines and on flights to and from the United States on foreign airlines declined in 2008 by 3.5 percent from 2007, dropping to 809 million, the Department of Transportation's Bureau of Transportation Statistics (BTS) today reported (Table 1).

BTS, a part of DOT's Research and Innovative Technology Administration, in a release of preliminary data, reported that U.S. airlines carried 3.7 percent fewer total system passengers in 2008 than in 2007. U.S. airlines carried 4.3 percent fewer domestic passengers in 2008 and 1.2 percent more international passengers than in 2007. Passengers to and from the United States on foreign carriers decreased 1.5 percent from 2007 (Table 1A).

This release includes data on U.S. carrier scheduled domestic and international service and foreign carrier scheduled international service to and from the United States. BTS regular monthly air traffic releases include data on U.S. carrier scheduled service only. For U.S. domestic service data for 2008, see the BTS December air traffic press release [BTS December Air Traffic](#) press release.

Total passengers on U.S. airlines and on foreign airlines to and from the United States declined in each of the last nine months of 2008 from the same month in 2007. The largest decline of 12.8 percent took place in November (Table 2).

Top Airlines in 2008

Southwest Airlines carried more total system passengers in 2008 than any other U.S. airline for the second consecutive year (Table 3). American Airlines carried more international passengers to and from the United States in 2008 than any other U.S. or foreign carrier for the 19th consecutive year (Table 7).

America West Airlines and US Airways now operate under a single certificate and report jointly as US Airways. Numbers reported as US Airways prior to October 2007 do not include America West's numbers. See the notes for system and international airline ranking tables 3 and 7 for America West's 2007 passenger numbers.

Top Airports in 2008

More total system passengers boarded planes in 2008 at Atlanta Hartsfield-Jackson International than at any other U.S. airport (Table 4); and more international passengers boarded planes at New York John F. Kennedy than at any other U.S. airport (Table 8).

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For more information on U.S. carrier domestic operations, see the [BTS December air traffic press release](#)

Flights Operated

U.S. carriers and foreign carriers serving the United States operated 10.7 million domestic and international flights in 2008, 4.8 percent fewer than were operated in 2007 (Table 1).

System (Domestic + International) Comparisons (Tables 1-4)

In other total system comparisons from 2007 to 2008 (Table 1):

Revenue passenger-miles (RPMs), a measure of the number of passengers and the distance flown, were down 2.1 percent in 2008.

Available seat-miles (ASMs), a measure of airline capacity using the number of seats and the distance flown, were down 1.0 percent in 2008.

Passenger load factor, passenger miles as a proportion of available seat-miles, was down 0.9 load factor points at 78.7 percent in 2008.

Flight stage length, the average non-stop distance flown per departure, was up 2.3 percent in 2008.

Passenger trip length, the average distance flown per passenger, was up 1.4 percent in 2008.

Among airlines, Southwest carried 101.9 million passengers on its system in 2008, the most of any airline (Table 3).

Among airports, Atlanta Hartsfield-Jackson was the busiest U.S. airport in 2008, with 43.6 million domestic and international passenger boardings (Table 4).

International Air Travel (Tables 5-8)

U.S. airlines and foreign airlines carried 159.1 million scheduled international passengers in 2008, unchanged from 2007. The passengers were carried on 1.34 million flights, down 1.5 percent from the 1.36 million flights operated in 2007 (Table 5).

U.S. airlines carried 57.5 percent of the international passengers in 2008, up from 56.9 percent in 2007 (Table 5).

International passengers on U.S. airlines and on foreign airlines to and from the United States declined in five of the last six months of 2008 from the same month in 2007. The largest decline of 9.6 percent took place in November (Table 6).

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In other international comparisons from 2007 to 2008 (Table 5):

International revenue passenger-miles (RPMs), a measure of the number of passengers and the distance flown, were up 0.5 percent in 2008.

International available seat-miles (ASMs), a measure of airline capacity using the number of seats and the distance flown, were up 2.6 percent in 2008.

International passenger load factor, passenger miles as a proportion of available seat-miles, was down 1.7 load factor points to 77.5 percent in 2008.

International flight stage length, the average non-stop distance flown per departure, was up 3.2 percent in 2008.

International passenger trip length, the average distance flown per passenger, was up 0.5 percent in 2008.

American carried 21.2 million international passengers in 2008, the most of any airline serving the United States (Table 7).

New York JFK was the busiest U.S. airport for international travel in 2008, with 10.6 million international passenger boardings (Table 8).

Reporting Notes

Data are compiled from monthly reports filed with BTS by commercial U.S. and foreign air carriers detailing operations, passenger traffic and freight traffic. This release includes data received by BTS from 174 carriers as of April 6 for U.S. and foreign carrier **scheduled** civilian operations. Go to <http://www.transtats.bts.gov/releaseinfo.asp> for the complete list of reporting and non-reporting carriers. U.S. carriers' foreign point-to-point flights are included in system and international totals.

For additional passenger, flight, RPM, ASM, load factor and freight numbers, go to the [BTS home page](#) and use the links in the Airline Industry box. These tables do not include U.S. carrier foreign point-to-point operations. For 2008, U.S. carriers reported 2,852,076 foreign point-to-point passengers.

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/.

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Additional traffic numbers are available on the BTS website at TranStats, the Intermodal Transportation Database, at <http://transtats.bts.gov>. Click on “Aviation.” For U.S. carrier system passengers, RPMs and ASMs by carrier through December, click on “Air Carrier Summary Data (Form 41 and 298C Summary Data),” and then click on “Schedule T-1.” Use crosstabs to find scheduled service.

For domestic numbers through December and international numbers through September by origin as well as by carrier, 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. Use crosstabs to find scheduled service. Complete international data will be released on June 11.

TranStats system and international totals do not include U.S. carriers’ foreign point-to-point flights.

Table 1: Scheduled Domestic and International Airline Travel on U.S. and Foreign Airlines*

	Annual		Change
	2007	2008	%
Passengers (in millions)	838.2	809.0	-3.5
Flights (in thousands)	11,200.9	10,663.4	-4.8
Revenue Passenger Miles (in billions)	1,096.3	1,073.3	-2.1
Available Seat-Miles (in billions)	1,378.1	1,364.2	-1.0
Load Factor**	79.5	78.7	-0.9
Flight Stage Length***	793.9	812.3	2.3
Passenger Trip Length****	1,307.9	1,326.8	1.4

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

* Includes U.S. carrier scheduled domestic and international service and foreign carrier scheduled international service to and from the United States. For U.S. domestic service data for 2008, see the BTS December air traffic press release http://www.bts.gov/press_releases/2009/bts012_09/html/bts012_09.html

** Change in load factor points

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

**** The average distance flown per passenger in miles

Note: Percent changes based on numbers prior to rounding.

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Table 1A. Passengers on U.S. Carriers and on Foreign Carriers' U.S. Flights 2007-2008
Passenger numbers in millions (000,000)

		2007	2008	Change %
U.S. Carrier	Domestic	679.2	649.9	-4.3
	International	90.5	91.5	1.2
	System	769.6	741.4	-3.7
Foreign Carrier	To and From U.S.	68.6	67.6	-1.5
Total		838.2	809.0	-3.5

Source: Bureau of Transportation Statistics, T-100 Market

Table 2. Scheduled Domestic and International Enplanements by Month on U.S. and Foreign Airlines*
Passenger numbers in millions (000,000)

	2006	2007	2006- 2007 Pct. Change	2008	2007- 2008 Pct. Change
January	60.9	62.3	2.3	63.3	1.5
February	57.8	58.6	1.4	61.5	4.9
March	71.3	72.8	2.0	73.1	0.4
April	68.8	70.4	2.4	68.7	-2.5
May	70.1	72.5	3.5	71.7	-1.1
June	73.3	75.9	3.5	74.0	-2.5
July	76.1	79.2	4.0	76.9	-2.8
August	72.8	78.0	7.1	74.2	-4.8
September	62.2	64.8	4.2	59.4	-8.5
October	66.9	69.8	4.4	64.9	-7.0
November	65.3	67.3	3.0	58.6	-12.8
December	66.2	66.6	0.6	62.6	-5.9
Yr. Total	811.7	838.2	3.3	809.0	-3.5

Source: Bureau of Transportation Statistics, T-100 Market

* Includes U.S. carrier scheduled domestic and international service and foreign carrier scheduled international service to and from the United States. For U.S. domestic service data for 2008, see the BTS December air traffic press release http://www.bts.gov/press_releases/2009/bts012_09/html/bts012_09.html

Note: Percent changes based on numbers prior to rounding.

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Table 3. Top 10 Airlines, ranked by January-December 2008 Scheduled Domestic and International Enplanements*
Passenger numbers in millions (000,000)

2008 Rank	Airline	2008 Enplaned Passengers	2007 Rank	2007 Enplaned Passengers	Pct. Change 2007-2008
1	Southwest	101.921	1	101.911	0.0
2	American	92.772	2	98.165	-5.5
3	Delta	71.615	3	72.924	-1.8
4	United	63.071	4	68.363	-7.7
5	US Airways**	54.776	7	42.172	29.9
6	Northwest	48.772	5	53.678	-9.1
7	Continental	46.919	6	48.975	-4.2
8	AirTran	24.574	8	23.741	3.5
9	JetBlue	21.824	10	21.305	2.4
10	SkyWest	20.668	9	22.047	-6.3

Source: Bureau of Transportation Statistics, T-100 Market

* Includes U.S. carrier scheduled domestic and international service and foreign carrier scheduled international service to and from the United States. For U.S. domestic service data for 2008, see the BTS December air traffic press release http://www.bts.gov/press_releases/2009/bts012_09/html/bts012_09.html

** US Airways' Oct-Nov 2007 and Jan-Nov 2008 numbers are the report of the merged US Airways and America West. The Jan-Sept 2007 numbers were reported separately by US Airways and America West. America West reported 15.657 million system passengers in Jan-Sept 2007.

Note: Percent changes based on numbers prior to rounding.

Table 4. Top 10 Airports ranked by January-December 2008 Scheduled Domestic and International Enplanements on U.S. and Foreign Airlines*
Passenger numbers in millions (000,000)

2008 Rank	Airport	2008 Enplaned Passengers	2007 Rank	2007 Enplaned Passengers	Pct. Change 2007-2008
1	Atlanta	43.575	1	43.090	1.1
2	Chicago O'Hare	33.602	2	36.428	-7.8
3	Los Angeles	28.526	3	30.083	-5.2
4	Dallas/Ft.Worth	27.070	4	28.282	-4.3
5	Denver	24.280	5	24.065	0.9
6	New York JFK	23.453	6	23.265	0.8
7	Las Vegas	20.734	7	22.154	-6.4
8	Houston Bush	19.809	9	20.721	-4.4
9	Phoenix	19.405	8	20.763	-6.5
10	San Francisco	18.085	13	17.271	4.7

Source: Bureau of Transportation Statistics, T-100 Market

* Includes U.S. carrier scheduled domestic and international service and foreign carrier scheduled international service to and from the United States. For U.S. domestic service data for 2008, see the BTS December air traffic press release http://www.bts.gov/press_releases/2009/bts012_09/html/bts012_09.html

Note: Percent changes based on numbers prior to rounding.

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Table 5. International Scheduled Airline Travel on U.S. and Foreign Airlines*

	Annual		Change %
	2007	2008	
Passengers (in millions)	159.1	159.1	0.0
U.S. Carriers	90.5	91.5	1.2
Foreign Carriers	68.6	67.6	-1.5
Flights (in thousands)	1,361.3	1,341.0	-1.5
U.S. Carriers	862.9	848.2	-1.7
Foreign Carriers	498.4	492.8	-1.1
Revenue Passenger Miles (in billions)	501.7	504.1	0.5
U.S. Carriers	237.1	244.1	2.9
Foreign Carriers	264.6	260.0	-1.7
Available Seat-Miles (in billions)	633.7	650.4	2.6
U.S. Carriers	296.4	308.9	4.2
Foreign Carriers	337.3	341.5	1.2
Load Factor**	79.2	77.5	-1.7
U.S. Carriers	80.0	79.0	-1.0
Foreign Carriers	78.4	76.1	-2.3
Flight Stage Length***	2,056.4	2,121.3	3.2
Passenger Trip Length****	3,154.9	3,169.3	0.5

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

* Includes U.S. carrier scheduled international service and foreign carrier scheduled international service to and from the United States. For U.S. carrier scheduled international service data for 2008, see the BTS December air traffic press release http://www.bts.gov/press_releases/2009/bts012_09/html/bts012_09.html

** Change in load factor points

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

**** The average distance flown per passenger in miles

Note: Percent changes based on numbers prior to rounding.

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Table 6. International Scheduled Enplanements by Month on U.S. and Foreign Airlines*

Passenger numbers in millions (000,000)

	2006	2007	2006- 2007 Pct. Change	2008	2007- 2008 Pct. Change
January	12.0	12.3	2.4	13.0	5.3
February	10.5	10.8	3.5	11.8	9.4
March	13.0	13.5	3.7	14.5	7.1
April	12.9	13.0	0.9	13.2	0.9
May	12.9	13.2	2.3	13.8	4.6
June	14.0	14.4	2.9	14.6	1.3
July	15.2	15.7	3.0	15.7	-0.1
August	14.5	15.3	5.8	15.4	0.3
September	12.3	12.5	1.9	11.7	-6.8
October	11.8	12.6	6.8	12.0	-4.6
November	11.5	12.2	6.4	11.0	-9.6
December	12.7	13.3	5.1	12.4	-6.9
Yr. Total	153.3	159.1	3.7	159.1	0.0

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

* Includes U.S. carrier scheduled international service and foreign carrier scheduled international service to and from the United States. For U.S. carrier scheduled international service data for 2008, see the BTS December air traffic press release http://www.bts.gov/press_releases/2009/bts012_09/html/bts012_09.html

Note: Percent changes based on numbers prior to rounding.

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Table 7. Top 10 Airlines, ranked by January-December 2008 International Scheduled Enplanements*
Passenger numbers in thousands (000)

2008 Rank	Airline	2008 Enplaned Passengers	2007 Rank	2007 Enplaned Passengers	Pct. Change 2007-2008
1	American	21,233.2	1	21,613.4	-1.8
2	Continental	12,417.8	3	11,880.9	4.5
3	Delta	12,339.1	4	11,430.0	8.0
4	United	11,409.4	2	11,963.4	-4.6
5	Northwest	10,322.9	5	9,902.6	4.2
6	US Airways**	6,271.7	8	4,978.5	26.0
7	British Airways	5,579.8	6	5,711.5	-2.3
8	Air Canada	5,311.2	7	5,602.9	-5.2
9	Lufthansa	5,002.4	9	4,796.2	4.3
10	Air France	3,636.9	10	3,632.8	0.1

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

* Includes U.S. carrier scheduled international service and foreign carrier scheduled international service to and from the United States. For U.S. carrier scheduled international service data for 2008, see the BTS December air traffic press release http://www.bts.gov/press_releases/2009/bts012_09/html/bts012_09.html

** US Airways' Oct-Nov 2007 and Jan-Nov 2008 numbers are the report of the merged US Airways and America West. The Jan-Sept 2007 numbers were reported separately by US Airways and America West. America West reported 990.3 thousand international passengers in Jan-Sept 2007.

Note: Percent changes based on numbers prior to rounding.

Table 8. Top 10 Airports ranked by January-December 2008 International Scheduled Enplanements on U.S. and Foreign Airlines*
Passenger numbers in thousands (000)

2008 Rank	Airport	2008 Enplaned Passengers	2007 Rank	2007 Enplaned Passengers	Pct. Change 2007-2008
1	New York JFK	10,872.8	1	10,576.0	2.8
2	Los Angeles	7,962.4	2	8,317.0	-4.3
3	Miami	7,726.6	3	7,572.3	2.0
4	Chicago O'Hare	5,440.2	4	5,592.9	-2.7
5	Newark	5,416.9	5	5,264.2	2.9
6	Atlanta	4,572.3	6	4,449.6	2.8
7	San Francisco	4,158.2	7	4,250.2	-2.2
8	Houston Bush	3,820.5	8	3,757.5	1.7
9	Washington Dulles	2,844.1	9	2,826.9	0.6
10	Dallas/Ft.Worth	2,393.9	10	2,399.6	-0.2

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

* Includes U.S. carrier scheduled international service and foreign carrier scheduled international service to and from the United States. For U.S. carrier scheduled international service data for 2008, see the BTS December air traffic press release http://www.bts.gov/press_releases/2009/bts012_09/html/bts012_09.html

Note: Percent changes based on numbers prior to rounding.