

Airlines turn to computers to cut delays

by UPI

FORT WORTH, Texas - New computer programs adopted by U.S. airlines to track planes will get a severe test as winter weather sets in and the holiday travel season arrives. The goal is to reduce delays and cut the number of stranded passengers when bad weather closes airports, The New York Times reported. Recent incidents when loaded planes sat on runways for hours waiting for takeoff have made the issue a pressing one. Monte Ford, the chief information officer for American Airlines, said that carriers haven't moved quickly enough. "There wasn't as much a sense of urgency," he told the Times. "There wasn't as much concern about delays." The terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, which sharply reduced air travel, were followed by an increased emphasis on security and less on passenger comfort. Last December, when a storm closed the Dallas-Fort Worth airport, Don Dillman, American's operations manager, used a legal pad to track incoming flights and pick airports for diversion. Some small airports were overwhelmed by unexpected arrivals, the Times' report said.

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