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BagBlock

Enhancing Airline Operations Through Smart
Luggage Technology

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Current Issue of Mishandled Baggage in Air Travel

Every year, millions of airline passengers deal with the problem of lost or mishandled baggage. In 2023, U.S. airlines received about 2.7 million reports of baggage that was lost, delayed, damaged, or stolen (Fox Weather, 2023). Although that number is slightly lower than the year before, it still shows how often this problem happens. For travelers, missing luggage can mean ruined vacations, missed events, extra spending on clothes or essentials, and a lot of stress. Even with improved systems and tracking, airlines continue to struggle with making sure passengers and their luggage arrive at the same place on time.

There are many reasons why luggage gets mishandled, and several of them happen behind the scenes at airports. According to Skycop (2024), the most common reason—about 46% of cases—is baggage being mishandled during flight transfers. This often happens when people take connecting flights, especially in busy or international airports. Another 16% of mishandled baggage is simply not loaded onto the plane at all. Other causes include ticketing mistakes, security issues, and bags being accidentally switched – making up around 14%. Sometimes, weather problems, customs delays, or planes being too full can also cause bags to be delayed or left behind (8%). Loading errors (8%) and mistakes when bags arrive at the destination (4%) are also common. Lastly, incorrect or missing bag tags account for 4% of lost luggage (Skycop, 2024). These numbers show how many things can go wrong, even with small errors, in the process of handling baggage.

Not all airlines handle baggage equally well. According to the U.S. Department of Transportation, some airlines are much more likely to mishandle bags than others. For example, in 2023, American Airlines had the highest rate, mishandling over eight out of every 1,000 checked bags. On the other hand, Allegiant Air had one of the lowest rates, with fewer than two out of 1,000 bags being mishandled (Bureau of Transportation Statistics, 2024). This difference shows that airline policies, staffing, and systems can have a big impact on how often passengers run into baggage issues. The table below shows mishandling rates across major U.S. airlines, including the total number of bags handled and the percentage that were mishandled.

Airline	Total bags enplaned	Number bags mishandled	Percent bags mishandled	Percent scooters and wheelchairs mishandled
Allegiant Air	5,603,251	10,590	0.18	0.37
Endeavor Air (Delta subsidiary)	8,507,004	34,589	0.41	0.59
Southwest Airlines	129,704,856	587,339	0.45	1.63
Delta Air Lines	80,022,632	394,386	0.49	0.71
Hawaiian Airlines	6,062,604	30,003	0.49	1.21
Frontier Airlines	9,368,960	48,234	0.51	1.88
Jetblue Airways	15,303,556	79,957	0.52	1.61
Spirit Airlines	12,935,699	68,006	0.53	5.35
Skywest Airlines	26,128,627	139,299	0.53	0.89
Alaska Airlines	22,215,385	131,551	0.59	1.76
PSA Airlines (American subsidiary)	10,481,002	63,756	0.61	2.11
Republic Airways (American subsidiary)	8,348,934	55,567	0.67	1.15
Envoy Air (American subsidiary)	8,178,974	58,680	0.72	1.54
United Airlines	55,951,329	412,601	0.74	1.2
American Airlines	71,211,818	582,499	0.82	1.79
Total	470,024,631	2,697,057	0.57	1.38

Figure 1. Mishandled baggage reports by U.S. airlines in 2023. Source: Air Travel Consumer Report, Department of Transportation, 2023.

The problem is so common that an entire business has been created around it. UnclaimedBaggage.com buys lost luggage from airlines after they’ve tried for 90 days to return it to its owner. The company then sorts through the bags, cleans the items, and sells them in a large retail store in Alabama and online. Items can include clothes, electronics, books, jewelry, or other personal items. The success of this business shows just how many bags are never reunited with their owners. It also highlights the need for better baggage handling systems so fewer bags go unclaimed in the first place.

In short, lost and mishandled baggage is a major and ongoing issue in air travel. It causes inconvenience for passengers and reflects gaps in airline operations. With millions of bags mishandled every year and businesses like Unclaimed Baggage built around the problem, it’s clear that more reliable and creative solutions are needed. This paper introduces one such solution that aims to reduce lost luggage and improve travel for everyone.

Solution Overview

Lost luggage is one of the most frustrating travel issues faced by millions of passengers worldwide each year. In many cases, travelers are forced into prolonged and difficult disputes with airlines to track, recover, or receive compensation for their belongings. Traditional systems rely heavily on manual processes and outdated infrastructure, leading to inefficiency, a lack of accountability, and poor customer service. Enter BagBlock, a blockchain-powered solution that gives travelers more control, transparency, and security in managing their luggage during air travel.

This report focuses on the solution provided by BagBlock and how it fundamentally improves the process of luggage handling, tracking, and compensation through advanced digital integration.

The BagBlock Traveler Platform: How It Works

The BagBlock solution is built around a simple and user-friendly traveler platform that integrates three key technologies: image uploading, geo-tagging, and blockchain. At check-in, travelers interact with the BagBlock platform by taking three essential steps:

1. Upload a Photo of Their Luggage: Travelers snap a picture of their checked baggage, ensuring that the system has a visual record of what the bag looks like. This aids in faster identification in the event of loss or mishandling.
2. Upload a Photo of Their Boarding Pass: This links the baggage directly to the traveler's flight details, ensuring accurate and secure association between the bag and its intended flight path.
3. Enable Geo-Tag Tracking: By using geo-tagging, the platform monitors the bag's physical movement across locations, terminals, and transfers, creating a traceable digital path of the luggage's journey.

Each piece of this data such as image, travel details, and location is securely recorded in a blockchain ledger. This decentralized system ensures the information is immutable, tamper-proof, and accessible only by authorized parties. The traveler remains in control, without relying entirely on the airline's internal baggage systems.

Why This Solution Works

The effectiveness of BagBlock lies in four major benefits it brings to the baggage claim process:

1. Proof for All Parties

By securing luggage data on the blockchain at the point of check-in, both travelers and airlines have indisputable proof that a bag was checked in correctly. This eliminates confusion and dispute about whether a bag was properly processed. The visual and data trail stored in the blockchain prevents scenarios where responsibility is shifted back and forth between airport staff or between connecting airlines.

2. Instant Detection

Speed is another major strength of BagBlock. Blockchain's ability to track and verify transactions in real-time enables the system to detect a missing bag as soon as it deviates from its expected geo-location path. Unlike traditional systems where travelers may only realize their bag is lost after waiting at the carousel, BagBlock identifies and flags issues almost instantly, potentially even before the traveler lands.

3. Transparency and Accountability

Because blockchain is a transparent digital ledger, every step of the baggage's journey is visible in the system. This transparency makes it nearly impossible for any party to alter records or hide errors. It promotes accountability among airlines, while also giving travelers full visibility into the location and status of their bags.

4. Automated Payouts with Smart Contracts

Perhaps one of the most user-friendly features is the platform's use of smart contracts. These are self-executing agreements coded into the blockchain. If BagBlock identifies a bag as lost, a smart contract is triggered to automatically submit a claim and initiate a payout to the traveler. This eliminates the need for travelers to go through lengthy claim processes or "fight" with airlines for reimbursement.

Real-World Example: Leon's Experience

To understand the practical impact of BagBlock, consider the case of Leon, a traveler departing from JFK International Airport. Upon checking in, Leon uses the BagBlock platform to upload a photo of his suitcase and boarding pass. His bag, unfortunately, goes missing during a flight transfer.

Because Leon's data is already secured on the blockchain and geo-tagging indicates a failure to transfer the bag properly, BagBlock automatically flags the luggage as lost, submits a claim, and processes a payout, all without Leon needing to spend hours on phone calls or paperwork. He receives confirmation and compensation within minutes, rather than days or weeks.

This example illustrates the time-saving, stress-reducing, and customer-focused advantages that BagBlock offers. By acting instantly and autonomously, it redefines the customer experience in lost luggage situations.

Overall, BagBlock offers a transformative solution to the long-standing problem of lost luggage in air travel. Through its traveler platform, which integrates luggage imaging, boarding pass linkage, geo-tracking, and blockchain, the system ensures fast, secure, and transparent handling of baggage data. The result is a proactive system where travelers are empowered, accountability is shared, and compensation is guaranteed without struggle. The platform's strength lies not only in the cutting-edge technology it uses but in the clarity and confidence it restores to an often frustrating part of air travel. With BagBlock, travelers can trust that their luggage is in good hands and if not, that justice will be served instantly.



Coding

To show how this automation works in practice, the following smart contract demonstrates the core payout logic used by the BagBlock platform. Written in Solidity, the contract tracks each bag checked in by travelers, monitors its arrival status, and triggers a compensation payout if a bag is not confirmed as delivered within 24 hours after the scheduled arrival time. Once a bag is flagged as lost, the contract sends a fixed amount of ETH (e.g., 0.1 ether) directly to the traveler’s wallet – without requiring manual claim filing. The contract includes basic safeguards to ensure payouts are only made under the right conditions and that funds are available. This decentralized approach ensures transparency, trust, and fast resolution for affected passengers.

```
// SPDX-License-Identifier: MIT
pragma solidity ^0.8.0;

contract BagBlock {
    struct Bag {
        address payable traveler;
        uint arrivalTime;
        bool arrived;
        bool lost;
        bool paid;
    }

    mapping(uint => Bag) public bags;
    uint public nextBagId;
```

```

// Amount to pay if bag is lost (e.g., 0.1 ether)
uint public constant COMPENSATION_AMOUNT = 0.1 ether;

// Traveler checks in
function checkIn() public {
    bags[nextBagId] = Bag(payable(msg.sender), 0, false, false, false);
    nextBagId++;
}

// Set arrival time (oracle/API)
function setArrivalTime(uint bagId, uint _arrivalTime) public {
    require(msg.sender == bags[bagId].traveler, "Not your bag.");
    bags[bagId].arrivalTime = _arrivalTime;
}

// Confirm bag arrival
function confirmArrival(uint bagId) public {
    require(msg.sender == bags[bagId].traveler, "Not your bag.");
    bags[bagId].arrived = true;
}

// Check if bag is missing after 24 hours and trigger payout
function checkMissing(uint bagId) public {
    require(bags[bagId].arrivalTime > 0, "Flight arrival not recorded.");
    require(!bags[bagId].arrived, "Bag already arrived.");
    require(!bags[bagId].lost, "Already marked lost.");
    require(block.timestamp > bags[bagId].arrivalTime + 1 days, "Too soon to check.");

    bags[bagId].lost = true;

    // Pay traveler if not already paid
    if (!bags[bagId].paid) {
        require(address(this).balance >= COMPENSATION_AMOUNT, "Insufficient contract
balance.");
        bags[bagId].traveler.transfer(COMPENSATION_AMOUNT);
        bags[bagId].paid = true;
    }
}

// Allow contract to receive ETH to fund payouts
receive() external payable {}
}

```

This contract is a simplified prototype, but it captures the core of what makes smart contracts powerful in travel tech: they reduce bureaucracy, speed up resolution, and increase user trust through automatic, rule-based execution.

How We Charge

When thinking about how to charge for BagBlock, we wanted to keep it simple, affordable, and fair for travelers. Since losing your luggage is already stressful, our goal was to offer protection without adding more hassle or hidden fees. That's why we created two easy options: a small pay per trip fee or an annual plan for people who travel often.

Pay Per Trip Plan

This option is great for someone who travels occasionally. You just pay a small one-time fee (around \$2–\$5) for each trip, and you're covered. That includes:

1. Uploading a photo of your bag and boarding pass before your flight
2. Tracking your bag's location through geo-tags
3. Getting an automatic payout if your bag doesn't show up within 24 hours after your flight lands
4. Filing a claim for you so you don't have to argue with the airline

It's a simple way to feel protected while traveling, without committing to a subscription.

Annual Plan

If you travel a lot whether it's for work, school, or just often flying to see family or friends we have the \$30/year premium plan which makes more sense. It gives you coverage for every trip, internationally or domestically and covers you all year long. You get everything in the pay-per-trip plan plus extras like faster support and early access to new features we might add later.

Why This Pricing Makes Sense

We wanted a model that keeps BagBlock running smoothly but also makes sense for people using it. Since the platform uses blockchain and smart contracts, there are some real costs behind the scenes like tech and transaction fees. These two options help cover that while still being super affordable.

Also, having the annual plan helps us build steady income, which we can use to improve the platform and grow. Down the line, we could even offer group plans or bundle it with travel insurance or luggage purchases to give people even more value. At the end of the day, we're trying to make sure people have peace of mind while traveling and knowing that if their bag gets lost, they're not stuck dealing with it alone.

Who We Partner With and Why

Building the right partnerships is one of the most important parts of making BagBlock successful. While we eventually want to work with airlines, we know that as a startup, it's not realistic to rely on them right away. So instead, we're starting with partnerships that are more

accessible and more likely to say yes early on like insurance companies, luggage brands, and travel-related services.

Insurance Companies

One of the biggest opportunities we see is working with travel insurance companies. BagBlock gives them something they don't currently have: verified, time-stamped, and blockchain-backed proof that a traveler's bag actually went missing. This makes the claims process easier for everyone. Insurance companies can use our data to reduce fraud, speed up approvals, and even automate payouts.

In return, they can offer BagBlock to their customers as a built-in feature or an optional upgrade when someone buys travel coverage. We think this is a win-win. Travelers get more peace of mind, and insurance companies look good for providing a smoother experience. Some may even want to add BagBlock directly into their mobile apps so everything from tracking to payout happens in one place. That kind of visibility could help us grow quickly and reach more users without depending on airlines to adopt our tech.

Luggage Brands and Travel Gear Companies

We also see a great opportunity with luggage brands. Companies that make smart suitcases, NFC tags, or even high-end travel gear are natural partners for us. For example, if someone buys a suitcase, they could get a BagBlock trial or QR code that walks them through setting up our service. We could also co-brand luggage tags or bundle our app with their products.

This would help us build awareness with people who are already thinking about travel protection, and it makes the tech feel like part of the luggage and not just an app they have to download later. It's also a more organic way to introduce people to our platform.

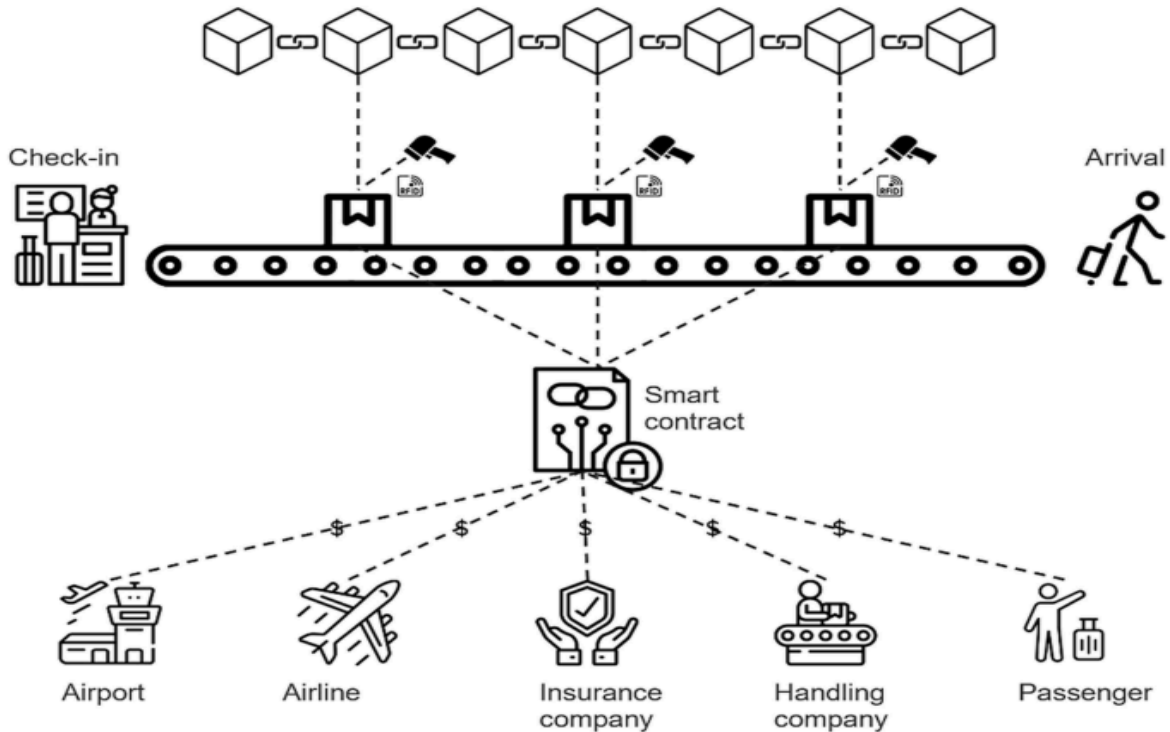
Why Not Airlines Yet?

Airlines are definitely important, but working with them as a new company is tough. They have long timelines, strict processes, and legal concerns. They also have their own baggage systems and might be hesitant to try something new unless it's been proven to work.

That's why our plan is to start small but smart to prove BagBlock works with insurance and luggage brands, show that customers love it, and then use that momentum to go back to airlines when we're in a stronger position. We want them to see that we're not just an idea but a tool that travelers and partners already trust.

By focusing on companies that already care about solving luggage problems, we can grow faster, and help more people right away. These early partnerships are how we show the value of BagBlock and build credibility before expanding even bigger.

BagBlock Process Flow



Security and Bagblock

One of the most significant design features of the BagBlock system is that it is multi-layered and secure. In addition to giving customers a decentralized baggage claims platform, BagBlock offers various fraud prevention measures and technical security controls that are meant to ensure data integrity, stop the misuse of the current system, and protect users from identity-based baggage theft. This section of the report outlines the primary fraud controls integrated into the platform and the advanced security technologies that make it more resilient to external and internal threats.

Using Blockchain to Prove Custody

The primary fraud prevention mechanism of BagBlock is its use of blockchain-based custody tracking. Every bag is associated with a unique identifier monitored on the blockchain when a user uploads an image of their bag and digital boarding pass at check-in. The metadata (including GPS and timestamp info) from the image is hashed and stored on-chain, creating a verifiable, tamper-proof custody record. Unlike traditional airline systems, which rely on internal scans that can be missed or manipulated, this process allows travelers to generate their own evidence trail. Flight arrival data can be verified using public APIs. If no follow-up delivery proof is uploaded within a set window, such as a second image within 24 hours of arrival, the bag is flagged as potentially lost, and a smart contract is triggered to begin the claims process. This method eliminates the need for direct airline integration and allows the platform to rely solely on passenger-submitted data for verifying custody.

Smart Contracts That Keep It Fair and Fast

Smart contract automation helps streamline the process further. If a bag fails to be confirmed as delivered within the designated time frame, the smart contract initiates either a claim payout or a case review, depending on the user's tier of service. This reduces the burden on customer support teams and minimizes inconsistencies in manual decision-making. With pre-coded, trustless execution, smart contracts help protect against both claimant and insider abuse. Projects like Etherisc and Insurwave have implemented similar approaches in the travel and shipping industries to automate claims, and BagBlock builds on that model with a focus on airline luggage (World Economic Forum).

To discourage fraudulent submissions, BagBlock incorporates a few key deterrents. First, users may be required to stake a small refundable deposit when initiating a claim typically \$5-10. If the claim is approved, the stake is returned; if not, it is forfeited. Second, all claims must be submitted within a specific time window such as within 48 hours of flight arrival which prevents retroactive tampering or delayed evidence uploads. Finally, the system uses metadata hashing to validate the authenticity of submitted photos, specifically checking EXIF data for timestamp and location consistency. These controls collectively help keep the platform secure without requiring excessive user friction.

Built In Fraud Prevention Tools

Apart from its blockchain foundation, BagBlock features various sophisticated security mechanisms to increase fraud resistance. These include biometric pickup access, which involves linking the passenger's biometric data (e.g face or fingerprint) with their recorded identity at check-in or boarding. This data could later be used to verify identity at baggage claim, helping prevent impersonation-based fraud. While biometric identification hasn't yet been fully adopted in aviation, there's growing interest in its implementation. More than 75% of passengers say they are willing to use biometrics instead of traditional documents if it speeds up the process and improves security (IATA Global Passenger Survey 2022). For BagBlock, this could be especially useful in high-risk or international environments, though it is likely more of a long-term feature than a core part of the MVP.

Advanced Features: Biometrics and Encryption

A related security level is encrypted communication between BagBlock smart tags and its mobile application. Standard RFID tags used in contemporary systems are vulnerable to spoofing or signal tapping. BagBlock prevents this risk by encrypting all data exchanges between the tag and app using asymmetric cryptography protocols similar to those used in secure messaging apps and crypto wallets. This prevents third parties from intercepting, cloning, or altering transmitted data. In high-traffic airports where data interception risks are higher, encrypted communication reduces vulnerabilities and adds credibility to the data logs.

Audit Trails That Can't Be Argued With

Finally, BagBlock supports automated creation of audit trails. Each custody event is recorded on the blockchain and can be exported as a verifiable log if requested by a user, airline, or insurer. These logs serve as clear, objective documentation in case of disputes and help speed up the claims process. Traditional systems often rely on unclear or incomplete records, leading to delays or rejected claims. With BagBlock, every action is time-stamped and stored immutably, making the platform a reliable source of truth.

The combination of blockchain-based logging, automation through smart contracts, traveler-generated custody proofs, encrypted communication, fraud deterrents like staking and submission windows, and optional biometric or anomaly detection features, creates a multi-layered fraud-prevention system. While each function adds value individually, their combined effect helps differentiate BagBlock from both airline-controlled systems and existing tracking applications. By designing the platform around the traveler and not the airline, BagBlock avoids major integration hurdles while still creating a product that insurers, customers, and regulators can trust.

Overall, security and fraud prevention are not just benefits of BagBlock; they are central to its purpose. In an industry where mishandled bags cost billions and slow claims frustrate travelers, BagBlock's tamper-resistant design and decentralized custody model offer a clear step forward.

Risks and Challenges

BagBlock, while highly innovative, faces several important risks and challenges that must be addressed to ensure its success and long-term scalability. One of the most immediate concerns is data privacy. The platform processes sensitive user information, including boarding passes, geolocation data, and in some cases, biometric identifiers. While blockchain technology offers the benefit of tamper-proof recordkeeping, it does not automatically solve privacy concerns. Regulations such as the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) in Europe and the California Consumer Privacy Act (CCPA) in the United States require that all user data be handled with strict care. This means BagBlock must ensure end-to-end encryption, clear user consent, and secure storage of personal information – all while keeping the platform fast and easy to use.

Another major consideration is legal and regulatory compliance. Because BagBlock is intended to function across various countries and airport systems, it will have to navigate a wide range of local laws and rules. Jurisdictions differ in how they handle biometric data, blockchain applications, and insurance-related claims. For example, what is legal and enforceable in one country may not be recognized in another. BagBlock will need to work closely with legal advisors to ensure that its smart contract mechanisms and claims processes comply with local and international regulations, without compromising user experience.

As BagBlock grows, scalability becomes a technical challenge. With more users comes more data and more blockchain transactions. On public blockchains like Ethereum, this can lead to slower performance and rising transaction fees. To keep the platform accessible and affordable at scale, BagBlock may need to adopt Layer 2 solutions or transition to alternative blockchains that offer faster speeds and lower costs. Scalability is key not only for user satisfaction but also for maintaining financial sustainability as usage increases.

In addition, airline cooperation may pose a challenge. While BagBlock is designed to operate independently of airline systems, gaining industry-wide adoption and recognition may eventually require some level of collaboration. Convincing major airlines to accept blockchain-based baggage records as valid evidence – or to integrate the system into their own workflows—could be difficult due to existing legacy systems, union regulations, and potential concerns over accountability or liability. Without airline buy-in, some features of BagBlock may remain limited in scope.

Finally, cross-jurisdiction legal issues present another layer of complexity. Lost luggage incidents often involve multiple countries, especially on international flights. This raises difficult questions around the legal enforceability of smart contracts, data ownership rights, and how disputes are resolved when different legal systems are involved. BagBlock must ensure that its claims, compensation processes, and blockchain records are recognized and enforceable across borders to prevent confusion or legal conflict.

In conclusion, while BagBlock offers an innovative and much-needed solution to the problem of lost luggage, its success will depend on how well it navigates a range of technical, legal, and operational challenges. Ensuring strong data privacy, legal compliance across multiple jurisdictions, and a scalable blockchain infrastructure will be essential to gaining user trust and sustaining long-term growth. Additionally, building strategic relationships with airlines – despite initial resistance – and preparing for legal complexities across borders will be key to fully unlocking the platform’s potential. Addressing these challenges proactively will help BagBlock become not just a helpful tool for travelers, but a trusted part of the global air travel ecosystem.

Impact

Despite the challenges outlined earlier, BagBlock has the potential to significantly reshape the air travel industry, delivering measurable benefits not only for passengers, but also for insurers and airline partners. One of the most immediate and meaningful impacts lies in increasing trust among passengers. By providing real-time visibility into the location and custody of their luggage – along with blockchain-backed proof that a bag was properly checked—travelers are no longer left guessing or powerless when something goes wrong. Instead of relying on phone calls, paper claims, and airline representatives shifting blame, passengers have access to secure, tamper-proof data and automated support, leading to higher confidence and peace of mind throughout their journey.

Beyond the customer experience, BagBlock also creates real cost savings for the industry. Through smart contracts and automated processes, the system drastically reduces the need for insurers and travel providers to manually review and approve baggage claims. This leads to lower labor costs, fewer errors, and faster resolutions. In the long run, insurance partners could see a reduction in claim processing expenses, while also benefiting from enhanced fraud detection tools and verified evidence trails. The efficiency of automation helps shift the process from reactive and manual to proactive and digital.

Lastly, while BagBlock is designed with travelers in mind, it offers long-term advantages for airlines as well. By reducing the number of baggage-related complaints and speeding up the claims process, airlines can improve their customer satisfaction scores without having to overhaul their internal baggage systems. The transparent recordkeeping provided by blockchain can also reduce disputes and clarify liability when issues arise, saving time for staff and protecting brand reputation. Ultimately, BagBlock offers a win-win model – one that not only protects passengers but also helps modernize a broken part of the travel experience, making flying less stressful and more efficient for everyone involved.

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