

Technology: Nowhere to Hide



As threats to airline travel evolve, so are the ways in which the TSA combats them. JIA's latest line of security leaves little to the imagination.

—by Rebecca Dolan

Once upon a time, airport security meant little more than running your carry-on through an X-ray machine before walking through a metal detector. But as new threats to passenger security emerge, so must the technology used by airports to keep travelers safe. Here's a lowdown on the security devices you may see the next time you fly the friendly skies.

Millimeter Wave Technology (MMW)

MMW is a type of imaging technology recently installed at Jacksonville International Airport (JIA). Unlike a traditional X-ray, which produces a picture of bones beneath the skin, MMW creates an image of the skin surface to reveal possibly concealed items. The result: a three-dimensional picture of the

passenger, disrobed.

Because of the embarrassment these pictures could cause passengers, a number of measures exist to ensure their privacy. First, images are never visible to the security officer inspecting the passengers, but by another TSA employee in a separate, closed-off room. The passenger's face is blurred in the image, and the machine does not have the capacity to save, print, or transmit images—they are erased forever after the passenger completes the screening process.

Costing \$170,000 each, MMW machines are an alternative to the typical, some say invasive, pat-down. As a passenger stands inside what looks something like a telephone booth, electromagnetic waves are emitted by two



antennas rotating around the body. As the waves bounce off the body, the machine creates an image that resembles a photo negative (pictured above).

Because humans generate and

Top: TSA; Bottom: L-3 Security & Detection Systems