

TRAVEL IN THE 21st CENTURY



ILLUSTRATION: TIFFANY BAKER/CNNMONEY

We have often reported on the newest and most innovative tech trends, many of which are already in use today. Not only do people want to communicate via phones/Smartphones/tablets/laptops, they want to be able to surf the web whenever they want from everywhere. With the upcoming vacation season looming, why should our luggage not be as up-to-tech-date as our other devices? Well, they soon will not only be durable but be technologically enhanced.

The luggage manufacturers' goal is to improve one's travel experience so adding electronic capability and communications makes sense. But in what ways? **Rimowa**, the German luggage manufacturer, is developing with Airbus and Deutsche Telekom a case line called "Bag2Go" which will interact with sensors in Airbus cargo holds to identify its location. **Samsonite** is introducing "GeoTrakR" luggage which contains its tracking system; the **Andiamo** company is introducing its luggage version with its own Wi-Fi hotspot and battery charger. **Bluesmart**, an upstart company whose target audience is a younger, more mobile and adventurous customer, has developed a carry-on bag with Bluetooth-enabled locks, GPS tracking, built-in scale, and ports for charging your device. Another young company, **Trunkster**, is developing its version of "smart luggage" which will have a tracking system, USB chargers, and battery. And there will be more newcomers with brilliant ideas with old guard firms designing what they feel their customers will want most.

But the most valuable feature that could prove to be the most useful for ALL travelers will be the GPS tracking system where lost luggage will become a thing of the past. Imagine being able to travel via different airlines, to several countries, and never lose another piece of luggage. This feature – and benefit for the average person – would ostensibly save a lot of grief, panic, and anger from the customers' perspective and clear out those “dead-end luggage” rooms that exist in most airports around the world. “*Trakdot*” is just one GSM device that texts and emails users the location of their luggage when their flight lands...for a fee of course. To comply with air regulations, these systems will automatically shut down once the luggage is stored, and automatically turn back on when the plane lands.

Not only have we become connected universally, we might actually be able to hang on to our belongings no matter where in the world we travel, as well as power up our “best friend” devices as we traverse the planet. James Bond and his spy buddies will no longer be unique in their tools of the trade.