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LOCATION-DETECTING BEACONS HELP BLIND TRAVELERS NAVIGATE SAN FRANCISCO AIRPORT

 TRAVEL & TOURISM

Indoor mapping firm indoo.rs is trialling its beacon technology at the airport, delivering location-sensitive, voice-based directions via smartphones.

Airports are confusing places at the best of times, but to navigate them with a visual impairment can be a trial for many blind people. To make the experience of flying more enjoyable for those with sight difficulties, indoor mapping firm [indoo.rs](#) has now installed its beacon technology at San Francisco International Airport (SFO), delivering location-sensitive, voice-based directions via smartphones.

Some 300 of the beacons — which behave in a similar way to Apple's iBeacon technology — have been placed at various points of interest around Terminal 2 at the airport, including stores, restrooms, boarding gates, baggage claim and even power outlets. When the indoo.rs app is downloaded, the beacons use triangulation to determine exactly where the passenger is within the vicinity. If they want to know what's around them, they can use the app to relay nearby facilities using Voiceover technology. If they're looking for something in particular, they can get directions to help them navigate the space.

Watch the video below to learn more about the project:

The scheme follows in the footsteps of [Navatar](#), a scheme out of the University of Nevada, Reno that attempts to achieve a similar outcome using camera technology. [SFO](#) says that, although the pilot scheme has had a focus on accessibility, it eventually wants to the app to work for anyone wanting to get around the airport. It's even looking at language translation options for foreign passengers. Could this technology work in other types of venues to help both the blind and non-blind with navigation?

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