

American Airlines User Flow Case Study

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Problem

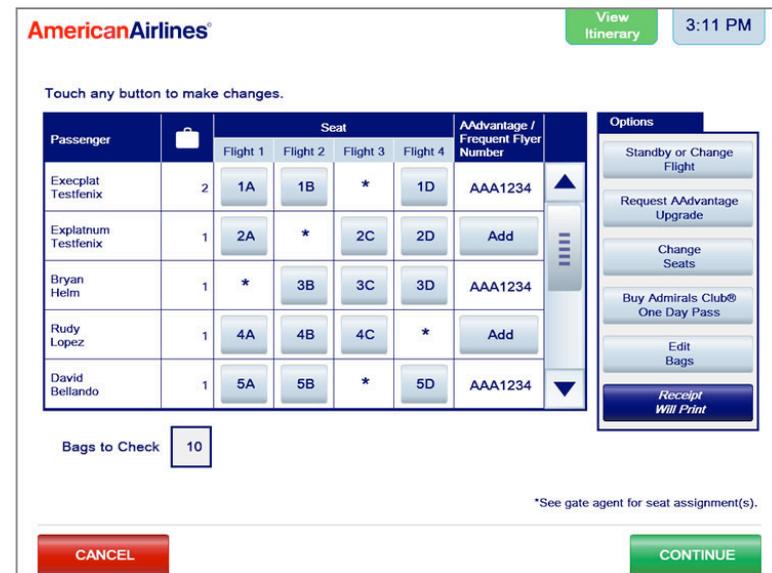
The user flow allows the passenger to select itinerary change options in any order they choose. This can lead to less than optimal outcomes.

Based on numerous customer service complaints, the most common problem is that the passenger pays for checked bags then triggers another option which would have provided them with free bag check. There are also instances where the passenger does something flight-specific change like upgrading cabins or changing their seat, then changes their flight which causes them to lose the cabin upgrade or preferred seat assignment.

Current State

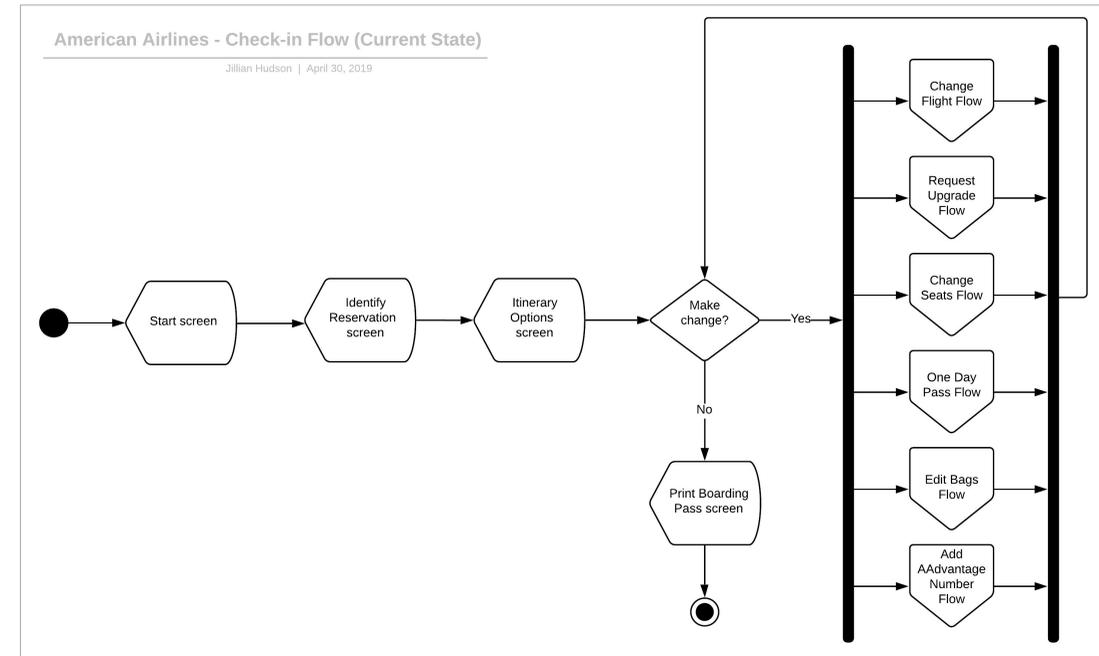
The work flow that allows problem to exist has all the additional features available for selection on one screen called the Itinerary Options. (See below.) This screen is easily one of the most complex screens in the application. It's a nexus for most of the features available at the check-in kiosk. It also violated my usability rule of one

unambiguous interaction per screen on the kiosk given the chaotic environment of the airport.

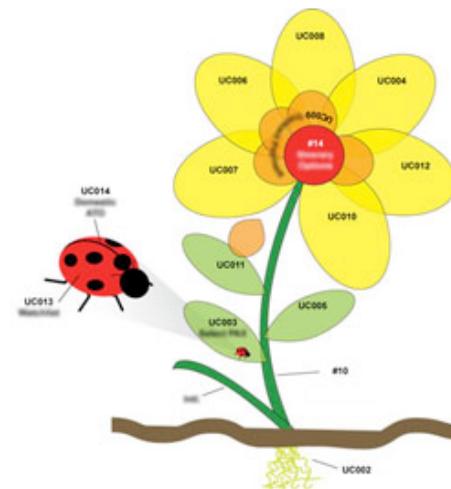


Itinerary Options screen, current state

Viewed as a process flow, the passenger selects a single feature, leaves the screen to complete that feature flow, then arrives back to an updated Itinerary Options screen. That is represented here in an infographic as a flower where the Itinerary Options screen is the center and all the features are the flower petals.



Check-in work flow, current "flower" state



Proposed Change

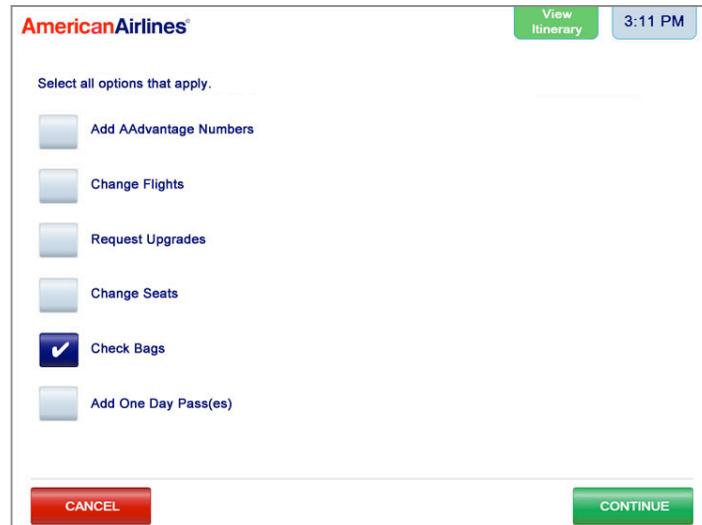
When I arrived at American Airlines, I was told by the team that each of the features were sequential like railroad tracks. The flower infographic was my response. However, they were onto something. The features *should* have been like railroad tracks.

The solution would be to split up the overly complex Itinerary screen into an Itinerary Options screen and an Itinerary Review screen, which would have the additional bonus of creating more white space for better readability and foreign language support. In



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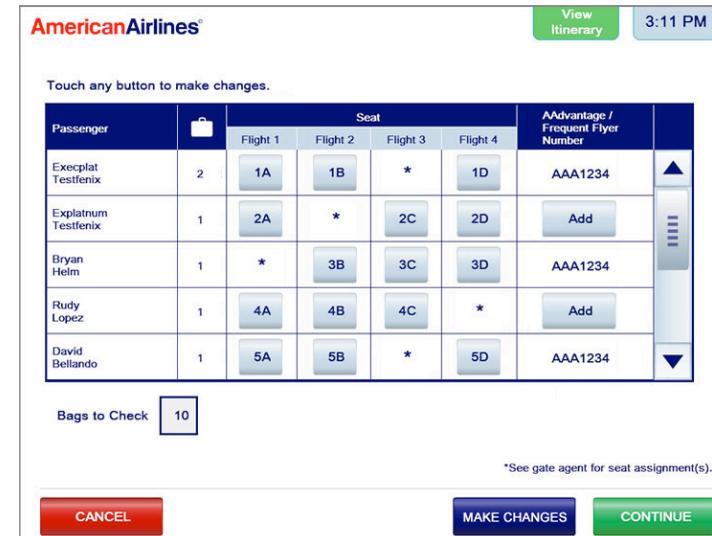
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Options screen, future state

the background the system would optimize the passenger's selections and display each feature option in the order that allows the passenger to have the best possible outcome. The suggested order is displayed in the future state flow below.

Once through all the pre-selected features, the passenger would arrive at the Review screen but would still have the option to go back to the Itinerary Options screen to make additional changes.

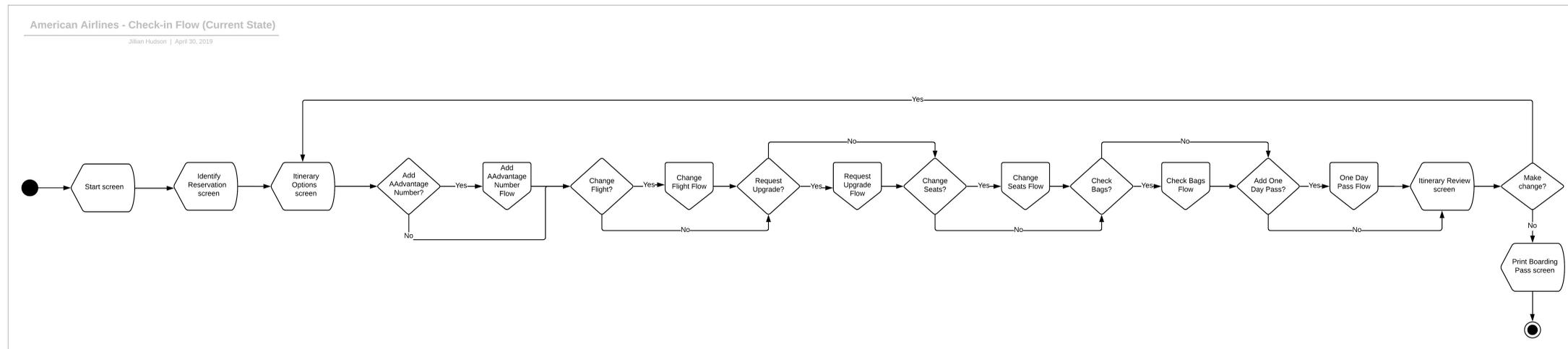


Review screen, future state

Resolution

I proposed this change many times during my stint as the sole UXer on the check-in kiosk product at American Airlines (2007-2011) but it was never enacted. It would have reduced customer services calls by @10% and improved foreign language support for a densely packed screen.

Note: Shopping cart functionality was highly recommended but out of scope for this proposal at the time due to a long-standing problem with SABRE.



Check-in work flow, future "railroad tracks" state