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American Express Global Business Travel plans to launch a "travel disruption" solution, powered by new firm Charter Solutions International, that enables service recovery in the event of ash-cloud-like travel chaos.

"It's not just about 'where is the traveler?' " said American Express Business Travel vice president for global IT strategy Michel La Bianca. "It's a combination of different subjects that need to be included, like the travel manager who wants to know where the travelers are but also might actually want to trigger an emergency travel policy during a situation," like one that allows first-class travel to escape a crisis.

As part of the Amex Mobile eXtend platform, Charter Solutions' patent-pending technology integrates Amex's Digital Travel Records with advanced traveler location functions. "The technology to geo-code travelers real-time, especially about triage and orchestration of travel responses, is the intriguing part," said La Bianca.

Amex has "started piloting internally," La Bianca said, and the company hopes to begin enrolling clients in the fourth quarter. Using the Digital Travel Records means Amex can avoid "GDS queue mechanics to get this kind of data," he said. "The real-time aspect on a global scale is what's unique."

Former Hi-Mark Software CEO Derek Beveridge last year co-founded Charter Solutions with CIO Thomas Pfeffer and CTO Vishrut Patel. The company has fewer than 10 employees but plans to add sales and marketing personnel soon for a wider market launch.

The Alpharetta, Ga.-based firm's Mobile Communications Mapping technology pinpoints travelers and "allows call centers to provide superior, proactive services to their customers during any event such as weather disruptions, natural disasters or terror alerts/crisis," according to company information.

The tool's key innovation, according to Pfeffer, is the speed at which the cloud-based server communicates with the Microsoft Silverlight-based presentation layer. "Formerly, a browser client was relying on refresh capability, continually asking the server, 'Is there something new? Is there something new?' " he said. "Now it's the reverse, with the server actively sending info out to the client. This is how I achieved real-time."

Charter Solutions offers a mix of pricing options, including monthly flat fees and per-transaction or per-record pricing. The company is planning apps for the major mobile platforms that clients can rebrand.

~ Jay Campbell, with assistance from Lauren Darson