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AIRLINE STOCKS

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### Airline stocks slump with wider market; swine flu spreads

By Christopher Hinton, MarketWatch

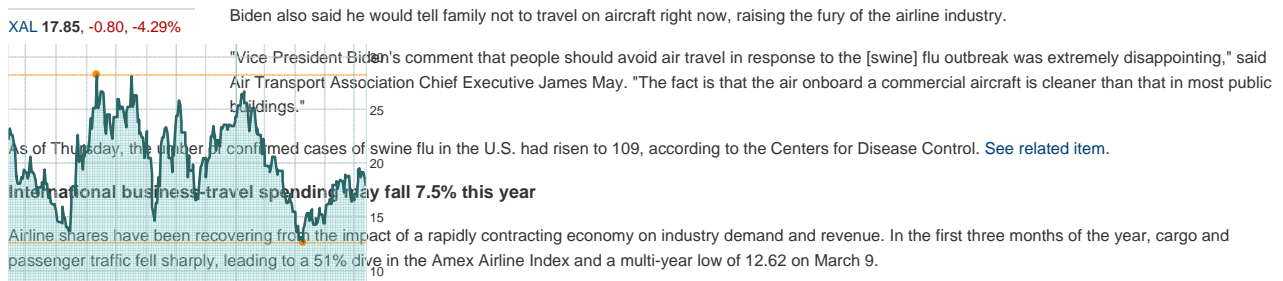
**NEW YORK (MarketWatch) --** Airline stocks declined Thursday with the wider market, as renewed fears over the swine flu outbreak weighed on carriers' shares.

At last check, the Amex Airline Index (XAL 17.85, -0.80, -4.29%) fell 1.3% to 16.68 with all but two of its 13 components trading down. In the last 52 weeks, the benchmark index has moved in a range of 28.22 to 12.62.

Shares of American parent company AMR Corp. (AMR 5.26, -0.29, -5.23%) slipped 3% to \$4.75. Continental (CAL 11.46, -0.77, -6.30%) fell 1.8% to \$10.51, United parent UAL Corp. (UAUA 5.25, -0.26, -4.72%) shed 5% to \$4.91, and US Airways (LCC 3.41, -0.34, -9.07%) lost 2% to \$3.90.

The Dow Jones Industrial Average (INDU 8,469, +50.34, +0.60%) shed 11 points to 8,174. See Market Snapshot.

Earlier in the day, U.S. Vice President Joe Biden said the government is focused on mitigation to contain the outbreak of swine flu by discouraging large groups of people coming together, according to a report from UPI. [Read more.](#)



On Thursday, a poll by London consulting firm Ascend projected a 7.5% drop in international business airfare spending over the next 12 months, with 53% of those polled saying they expect their company's travel budget to drop significantly.

"This is the weakest outlook for international business travel in nearly 20 years," said Ascend Chief Economist Peter Morris.

Ascend said it polled 280 frequent business travelers from over 35 countries, adding results reflect policies across many large international companies and corporations, not just individual respondents.

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