

Duff on Hospitality Law

## Online Travel Update: Google Updates Upcoming

By Greg Duff on 1.30.23 | Posted in Online Travel Update

Our weekly Online Travel Update for the week ending Sunday, January 27, is below. This week's Update provides updates on both DOT's and FTC's recent rulemaking efforts around "hidden" industry fees. Enjoy.

- **Google Updates Upcoming.** In an effort to comply with mounting pressure from the EU competition authorities, Google has agreed to make changes to the information displayed through several of its platforms and stores. Specifically, Google Flights and Google Hotels will soon distinguish between services provided by Google versus third parties, make clear that Google Hotels does not verify or confirm guest reviews and comply with the transparency guidelines applicable to other online booking platforms.
- **Objections Raised Over Proposed DOT Ancillary Fee Rules.** While industry trade groups have largely voiced support for increased transparency of ancillary fees, both [ASTA](#) and the [Travel Technology Association](#) have raised objections with the Department of Transportation's proposed regulation on the same subject. Specifically, both groups have raised objection with the draft regulation's exclusion of global distribution systems. The Travel Technology Association has also voiced concerns over the requirement that ancillary fee information must be displayed on the first page of search results, which, according to the Association, would make shopping extremely confusing for consumers, particularly for those using its metasearch site members.
- **Five Thousand Comments and Counting: FTC's Notice of Proposed Rulemaking Garners Attention.** As comments to the Federal Trade Commission's notice of proposed rulemaking on ancillary fees (including hotel and resort fees) continue to roll in, the FTC has elected to extend the comment period through February 8. Anyone interested in reviewing the comments can find a searchable catalogue here - <https://www.regulations.gov/docket/FTC-2022-0069/comments>.

Have a great week everyone. So great seeing so many people this past week in Seattle at HEDNA.

### **Google services to offer more accurate information in compliance with EU**

*January 27, 2023 via Verge*

Many of Google's offerings will soon be updated to provide clear and accurate information in compliance with consumer protection laws in the EU. Announced by the European Commission on Thursday, the Alphabet-owned company has agreed to introduce changes to Google Store, Google Play Store, Google Hotels, and Google Flights following ...

### **Las Vegas hotels accused of rental price conspiracy in class action**

*January 26, 2023 via Reuters*

(Reuters) - Several major companies that run prominent hotels on the famous commercial strip near Las Vegas were hit with a consumer antitrust lawsuit in federal court on Wednesday accusing them of conspiring to keep hotel room rates artificially high. The lawsuit in Nevada federal court alleged Caesars Entertainment Inc, ...

[Learn more](#) about the class action complaint

### **Budgets and options: Could "Save Now Buy Later" take off in travel?**

*January 25, 2023 via WIT*

Buy now, pay later – a form of credit that allows a consumer to pay off a purchase over time in smaller installments – has taken off in the travel industry in recent years. From 2019 to 2021, the number of BNPL loans originated in the United States by five ...

### **Fee transparency rule leaves out GDSs, and ASTA isn't happy about it**

*January 24, 2023 via Travel Weekly*

ASTA and the Travel Technology Association have filed comments with the Department of Transportation about its regulatory proposal that would require airlines and third-party sellers of airline tickets, including travel advisors, to disclose extra fees upfront. Both groups agree with the need for increased transparency for consumers when it comes ...

## **Legal Alert**

### **Unfair or Deceptive Fees Trade Regulation Rule Update**

The Commission agrees that allowing additional time for filing comments in response to the ANPR would help facilitate the creation of a more complete record. The Commission has therefore decided to extend the comment period for 30 days, to February 8, 2023. A 30-day extension will provide commenters adequate time to address the issues raised in the ANPR.

[Learn more](#) about Unfair or Deceptive Fees Trade Regulation Rule.