

Duff on Hospitality Law

This Week in Travel: NDC Progress, Booking.com Scrutiny, and AI Momentum in the Industry

By Greg Duff on 4.7.25 | Posted in Online Travel Update

Good Sunday morning from Seattle . . . Our Online Travel Update for the week ending Friday, April 4, is below. This week's Update features a number of follow up stories on topics covered in recent Updates, including Booking.com's challenges with fraudulent property listings and the major OTAs embrace of agentic AI. I've also included a few stories on corporate travel, including an update on airline adoption of NDC and details of Steve Singh's latest investment. As many of you might recall, I predicted (prematurely) that 2024 was going to be a year of great change in the GDS world. While we saw some changes (and one outspoken proponent of NDC abruptly change course), I still believe the industry will see dramatic changes in corporate and managed travel distribution in the year(s) ahead. Enjoy.

- **Airlines' Adoption of NDC Moving Slowly.** Henry Harteveldt's group, [Atmosphere Research Group](#), released a report last week detailing the airline industry's transition away from legacy Edifact technology to IATA's newer NDC technology. Of the airlines surveyed, only 27% have begun a wholesale transition to NDC for order processing, servicing and settlement capabilities (so-called "Offer and Order"). Eighty two percent (82%) of the airlines surveyed expect to make the transition by 2029. According to Harteveldt, whether the industry attains these goals is partially dependent on the GDSs and whether they commit the resources to make needed technology improvements. Hoteliers hoping to join the NDC parade may have a few years ahead of them.
- **UK Consumer Group Which? Calls Out Booking.com.** In its recent report, "[What Went Wrong with Booking.com?](#)", UK consumer group Which? identified several areas of concern contributing to an increasing number of fraudulent STR property listings. According to the report, Booking.com's initial denial of and then slow response to the concerns raised in the report have only compounded the concerns.

- **Expedia's Considered Adoption of AI.** In a recent interview with CIOdive.com, Expedia's SVP of data and AI, Shiyi Pickrell, shared details of the company's considered approach to AI. Echoing earlier statements of Expedia CEO, Ariane Gorin, Shiyi described AI as a tool to accelerate its existing strategic objectives – better experiences, growth and operational efficiencies. Employees at Expedia are given access to an AI “playground,” where employees can experiment with 19 large language model AI platforms (including agentic platforms). Potential use cases identified through use of the playground are then vetted by the company's responsible AI council (consisting of representatives from technology, security and legal) to ensure each is vetted appropriately.
- **Google Launches Hotel Price Drop Tool.** In case you missed the many stories these past few weeks detailing the recent launch of several new Google trip planning tools (many of which feature AI integrations), Google has launched a new hotel pricing tool (similar to Google's existing Google Flights product) that alerts users when identified hotels reduce prices. The new tool was released globally last week.

I hope you have a great week.

Report shows airlines making slow progress with NDC technology

April 2, 2025 via Travel Weekly

While two-thirds of airlines have at least begun the process of using NDC technology to digitize their third-party merchandising capabilities, only 27% have begun the holistic approach of digitizing their order processing, servicing and settlement capabilities.

Co-existence: The OTA-Led Defence Against an AI Takeover

April 2, 2025 via Hospitality Net

Below is an excerpt from SiteMinder's blog. “It's no secret that the AI revolution has arrived, and the online hotel distribution sector has already adapted to the first ripple effects. But OpenAI's Operator, launched earlier this year, revived concerns about the lifespan of long-standing industry players in the wake of ...

Booking.com Subject to Bogus Short-Term Rental Listings, Investigation Finds

April 2, 2025 via Skift Travel News

Fake short-term rental listings are indeed an industrywide problem, but Booking.com seems get more than its fair share of sketchy listings and fraudulent messages to guests. Share In its effort to expand its short-term rental business to compete with Airbnb, Booking.com has opened itself up to manipulation by ...

Concur Founder Backs New Corporate Travel Startup Juno

April 2, 2025 via Skift Travel News

This is another startup that Steve Singh is funding with the aim modernizing all aspects of business travel. Steve Singh, the founder of Concur, is co-leading the seed round of a new tech startup focused on a niche area of business travel. Juno is a travel booking and ...

Booking.com Executive on Why All Eyes are on India

April 2, 2025 via Skift Travel News

Booking.com is looking at India for its growing outbound potential and spending power, even as it adapts to the last-minute booking behavior of these travelers. Share India is among the biggest growth opportunities for online travel platform Booking.com, driven by a rising middle class that is adapting to ...

Could a tours and activities push from Google penalize OTAs?

April 1, 2025 via Phocus Wire

OTAs are at risk, as Google appears to be shaking up tours and activities listings, experts warn.

Expedia pursues agentic, generative AI with caution

April 1, 2025 via CIO Dive - News

Enterprises and their technology leaders are still in search of the ideal adoption pace for emerging technologies such as generative AI and, more recently, AI agents. Expedia Group was one of the first enterprises to start working with OpenAI after its hallmark tool launched in 2022, according to Shiyi Pickrell...

Google Unveils 2 New Travel Tools: Hotel Price Alerts and Screenshots for Trip Plans

March 28, 2025 via Skift Travel News

Google may not be releasing a trip planner any time soon, but it's consistently rolling out various other trip features and AI integrations across products. Google is rolling out new tools to help users plan trips, the latest in a group of travel-related features that the company has ...