

Duff on Hospitality Law

Between the AI Waves: Online Travel Catches Its Breath

By Greg Duff on 10.18.25 | Posted in Online Travel Update

Good Saturday morning from Seattle . . . Our weekly Online Travel Update for the week ending Friday, October 17, 2025, is below. Compared to last week and its seemingly endless parade of announcements around AI and online travel, this week's unexpected shortage of announcements provided many of us the opportunity to catch our breath and to consider further the many changes over the past few weeks. I hope you enjoy.

- **Kayak Debuts Natural Language Searches.** This past week, Kayak officially debuted its latest AI offering, AI Mode. AI Mode allows users of the metasearch site to use natural language prompts to plan and search a variety of travel products and services. The new functionality is powered by ChatGPT and leverages the data of Kayak's many travel providers. This new offering is in addition to Kayak's separate Kayak.ai site, which remains a platform for continued AI experimentation and testing by Kayak.
- **Google Proposes New Changes to Search Results (Again) to Satisfy EU Regulators.** According to a recent report from Reuters, Google is again proposing changes to its display of search results in its ongoing effort to satisfy its obligations under the DMA. This newest proposal reportedly provides OTAs and similar "vertical search services" the opportunity to bid on and display search results box alongside Google's own search box. Boxes will feature Google's and the winning OTA's available inventory. Suppliers will have the opportunity to display their own box, the location of which, according to the Reuters report, will be above or below the vertical search services box "depending on the relevance to the user's query."

Have a great week everyone.

Kayak Introduces AI Mode

October 15, 2025 via Skift

Kayak's AI Mode goes from soft launch to debut, so customers can search for travel using natural language. Plus: The company dishes up data on holiday travel trends. Kayak's latest AI offering got an official debut on Wednesday, with AI Mode bringing natural language search to

the mobile ...

Google Reportedly Offers to Tweak Search Results to Avoid EU Fine

October 14, 2025 via Engadget

The company could be fined \$35 billion or more for violating the Digital Markets Act. In order to avoid paying billions of dollars in fines for violating the European Union's Digital Markets Act, Google is considering changing how search results are displayed, Reuters reports. EU regulators first took issue with ...

Will AI Disrupt Booking and Other OTAs? One Analyst Says They're 'Well-Positioned'

October 13, 2025 via Skift

Booking Holdings and the other online travel agencies have survived through several platform shifts in the past. However, the gen AI revolution finds them in slower growth mode than in past era, upping the pressure.