

Duff on Hospitality Law

## **OTA & Travel Distribution Update – Dec. 2nd, 2016**

By Greg Duff on 12.16.16 | Posted in OTA Update

Hello all,

With the new year, we plan to post portions of the OTA & Travel Distribution Updates that I prepare and circulate among our hospitality clients each week. Although the posts will be a week or two behind the initial client updates, we hope that the information will nevertheless be relevant to those of you working in the digital marketing / e-commerce / distribution world. We hope you enjoy and benefit from these new posts. Below is the weekly update ending December 2nd, 2016.

Happy Holidays everyone.

**Add Instagram to Your List of Regulated Marketing Platforms [OTA / Social Media].** With surprisingly little attention from the hospitality industry, Instagram announced last month that it was introducing commerce to its widely used visual platform. Not only does this development present hoteliers with some interesting new marketing opportunities (as described in the linked article by Sabre), but it also provides OTAs a unique opportunity to re-direct and ultimately capture potential travelers at a much earlier stage in the travel planning funnel (inspiration). Hoteliers now need to add Instagram to the list of platforms (e.g. search, metasearch and reviews) that must be controlled and monitored in order to limit how their properties are featured by OTAs and other third parties.

**Amazon Makes a Seattle Connection [OTA / Search].** Amazon announced this past week that its Alexa-enabled devices have learned a new skill. With the Expedia skill enabled, Amazon's devices can now provide users details on flights, hotels and other trip components booked through Expedia as well as allowing users to compare and book rental cars. In prior Updates, we have included stories detailed the growing consensus (e.g. Rich Barton, Dara Khosrowshahi) that voice-enabled search is the new frontier in on-line travel. If you have not already come to the realization yourself, you've heard it here first: Alexa's new skill is just the beginning. Regardless of the success of this new functionality, OTAs with their large R&D budgets will do voice-enabled search better than anyone else. Time to now add voice-enabled search to your existing search limitations and/or requirements in each of your distribution contracts.

- **Instagram to become shopping platform?**
- **Expedia partners with Amazon's Alexa for voice offering**
- **Airbnb agrees to concessions in European cities**
- **Ctrip acquires Skyscanner**

**“Shopping coming to Instagram” – what this means for hotels and travel marketers**

With that simple headline, commerce arrived on one of the world's most engaging visual platforms.

Tnooz News Feed on Dec 2, 2016

**Book a trip with your voice? Travel giant Expedia launches new Amazon Alexa skill**

Today, Expedia is rolling out a new skill for Amazon's Alexa-enabled devices in advance of the busiest travel season of the year. With the Expedia skill enabled, travelers can ask Alexa for details on flights, hotel reservations, and other parts of their trip booked through Expedia. They can also ask ...

GeekWire on Nov 30, 2016

**Airbnb concedes to housing activists in two cities, limiting number of days entire homes can be rented**

Airbnb and affordable housing advocates are fighting a battle in cities around the world. Today, Airbnb made a big concession that could herald a truce between the two sides. The company announced it will limit the number of days hosts in London can rent out homes they don't live in.

GeekWire on Dec 1, 2016

**China Focus: China's Ctrip acquires Skyscanner**

China's top online travel agency Ctrip.com International is to acquire flight comparison site Skyscanner for 1.4 billion British pounds (about 1.74 billion U.S. dollars) and become its majority share-holder, sources with the companies said Thursday.

Xinhua News on Nov 25, 2016