

Duff on Hospitality Law

## OTA & Travel Distribution Update - March 31st, 2017

By Greg Duff on 4.7.17 | Posted in OTA Update

Some interesting stories in this week's GSB OTA & Travel Distribution Update (for the week ending March 31, 2017):

**Restaurant Bookings Today, Hotel Reservations Tomorrow [SOCIAL MEDIA].** This week's Chefs & Tech newsletter from Skift featured a story about Instagram's recently announced plans to allow users to book an appointment (or reservation) directly from a business's Instagram profile. This new feature will be available over the next few months. While Skift focused its piece on the implications for the restaurant industry (look out OpenTable and Yelp), I cannot imagine it will be too long before Instagram explores providing similar functionality to its hotel advertisers. According to the report, approximately 8 million businesses (no breakdown as to the number of restaurant or hotels) currently maintain profiles on Instagram. A new distribution / booking channel is born.

### **[Chefs+Tech: Restaurant Reservations on Instagram Coming Soon](#)**

*Skift Travel News, Mar 31, 2017*

With the addition of reservations for advertisers, Instagram will reach customers as they're most engaged, offering convenient booking and instant ROI for businesses. - Kristen Hawley

**Booking.com Stymied in Turkey [OTA].** Booking.com announced last week its plan to appeal a recent decision by Istanbul's 5<sup>th</sup> Commercial Court to temporarily enjoin the OTA from operating in Turkey (at least with regard to offering Turkish properties to Turkish travelers). According to Booking.com, the injunction relates to Booking.com's failure to maintain a travel license in Turkey (and is not related to the pending investigation by Turkish authorities into price parity). The case, which was brought by the Association of Turkish Travel Agents, alleges that Booking.com's marketing practices in Turkey (including the failure to maintain a Turkish travel license) constitute unfair competition. It is interesting to see such a suit brought over a travel license – an issue we have explored several times in the past few years.

### **[Turkish Court Limits Hotel Sales on Booking.com Website](#)**

*Skift Travel News, Mar 30, 2017*

Contrary to published reports, Booking.com's dispute with a local hotel association, which involves a license requirement among other issues, did not prompt a Turkish court to shut down the site's operations in Turkey. The court order does order Booking.com to stop selling

hotels in Turkey to domestic customers, and Booking.com...

**Trivago Advertising to Increase [METASEARCH].** You can expect more sightings of the creepy, beltless Trivago guy. What more can I say?

**Expedia Is Once Again Spending Big to Advertise on Trivago**

*Skift Travel News, Mar 29, 2017*

Travel metasearch sites such as Kayak, Trivago, TripAdvisor and Skyscanner would fall on hard times if they weren't attracting advertising spend from their parents' -- or former parents' -- rivals.

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Other news:

**Amazon's Alexa and Apple's Siri are waging war over the hotel room**

*TechCrunch News, Mar 27, 2017*

As the hotel industry wages war against Airbnb, companies making voice-powered assistants are also heading to battle in the hotel room itself. Bloomberg reports that Amazon's Alexa and Apple's Siri are vying for a spot in Marriott International's Aloft chain of hotel rooms, with both in testing at the Aloft...

**A new California housing law may offer an opportunity for 'sharp-minded entrepreneurs' to make money**

*Business Insider UK, Mar 26, 2017*

America is in the throes of "the new housing crisis." New-home construction is lagging behind demand and home prices are surging in many of the nation's most desirable locales, pricing out first-time buyers. In California, the nation's most populous state, the effects of the crisis are especially dire...