

Duff on Hospitality Law

OTA & Travel Distribution Update - Google leverages travel data to predict airline delays; Google's online travel efforts begin to pay dividends; Expedia or Priceline owned hotels may just be around the corner

By Greg Duff on 2.9.18 | Posted in OTA Update

This week's rather short OTA & Travel Distribution Update is below.

[Google Leverages Travel Data to Predict Airline Delays \[SEARCH\]](#)

("Google Already Knows Your Flight Is Delayed," Fast Co Design - Headlines, February 1, 2018)

Multiple news outlets featured Google's announcement this past week that through its combination of AI, Google's growing body of travel-related data and the data available through other third-party travel aggregators, Google Flights was poised to begin providing travelers flight delay information before the airlines themselves. While we don't routinely cover stories affecting primarily the airline industry, this widely promoted airline "audit" feature may signal a new willingness by Google to better leverage its unprecedented travel-related databases to provide products and features better than the suppliers themselves.

[Google's Online Travel Efforts Begin to Pay Financial Dividends \[SEARCH\]](#)

("How Google Is Getting a Boost in Online Travel," Barron's News, January 30, 2018)

I always find it interesting to read financial industry analysts' perspectives on the hospitality industry – some of which can be extremely insightful ("why didn't I think to frame the issue that way") and others can be entirely baseless. *Barron's* featured this past week a report issued by analysts at Wells Fargo, which outlined the many ways in which Google's efforts in travel-related search (e.g. growing direct booking through better educated and more qualified booking leads) are making great inroads in an otherwise "mature" industry.

[Expedia or Priceline Owned Hotels Just Around the Corner? \[OTA\]](#)

("Why Expedia or Priceline Might Just Be the Next Great Hotel Brand," Skift Travel news, January 23, 2018)

In preparing our weekly OTA Update, I purposely try to avoid including too many articles from *Skift* – the unabashed, self-promoting travel media platform. That said, there are times when

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Skift does a great job of summarizing in one story the many developments that have occurred over time and that when combined, have lead us to where we are now. The *Skift* article included in this week's Update is one of those stories. For anyone who has not been paying close attention to the changing world of lodging and distribution – particularly over the last 12-18 months – I encourage you to take the time to read this week's *Skift* story.

Other news:

Expedia Embraces Alternative Corporate Travel Payments With UATP

Pymnts.com, January 31, 2018

Top players in the online travel booking space are collaborating with UATP, an alternative global payment solution accepted by airlines and travel merchants, to support the use of the payment tool for corporate travelers.