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Duff on Hospitality Law

Hilton Bypasses the GDS with New Navan Connection

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Good Sunday morning from London . . . We are back after the July 4 holiday break. Our Online Travel Update for the week ending Friday, July 10, 2026, is below. Hilton's announced direct connection with managed travel platform Navan (and the bypassing of traditional global distribution systems) captured most of this past week's headlines (and client conversations). Enjoy.

Super.com (yes, Super.com) Achieves Unicorn Status. Self-titled "consumer savings super app," Super.com announced this past week that it had closed its latest funding round (Series D) at a pre-funding valuation of $1.2 billion. Super.com offers users a membership-based program (Super+), which Super.com compares to Costco's and Amazon's membership programs. Over the past ten years, the company has operated as Snaptravel (2016), Snapcommerce (2020) and now Super.com.

Booking.com Offers Concessions to Close Greek Investigation. Greek competition authorities are seeking public comment on recently announced commitments by Booking.com to resolve an investigation into the online travel agent's (as well as other agents') commercial practices. At issue, are Booking.com's Default Ranking Mechanism, the Preferred Partner Programme (and Preferred Plus Programme) and the Booking Sponsored Benefit discount (aka price match) program. To end the investigation, Booking.com has proposed providing Greek properties greater transparency around its default ranking practices in its general contract terms and other communications, removing its performance score as a criterion for Greek property preferred program participation (while adopting new eligibility criteria for Greek properties that exclude reference to external pricing or availability) and providing additional transparency around application of Booking.com's Booking Sponsored Benefit. A complete list of Booking.com's commitments is available here. Public comments are being accepted until July 20.

Hilton Announces Direct Connection with Navan. Where to begin with this one? This week's announcement raises more questions than it answers. What we know is that Hilton will soon have a direct connection with managed travel platform Navan through which Hilton will provide rates and inventory (and other content) directly without the involvement of any intermediary or connectivity partner, including, the global distribution systems, which have historically enjoyed a choke hold on the distribution of managed travel content. What we don't know is how (if at all) the content provided directly to Navan will differ from that available through traditional channels. What incentive will Navan have to use this direct connection and bypass traditional channels and their widely known rebates, credits and other incentives. For years, we have detailed the fits and starts of the NDC rollout among airlines and distribution channels. We may be seeing the start of a similar industry shift in lodging. Stay tuned.

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Booking.com's Phishing Problems Persist. This time, Japan hoteliers are the primary targets of hackers seeking to trick employees into downloading malicious files.

Newly Announced Programs Seek to Reward Social Media Content Creators. While social media conversion still remains a question, the uncertainty isn't stopping online travel platforms from implementing programs that reward content creators for bookings leveraging their content.

Have a great week everyone.

Hussein Fazal on Super.com's 10-Year Journey to Becoming a Unicorn
July 9, 2026 via Betakit
After a decade that saw it begin as an online travel agency and evolve into a consumer "savings super app," Toronto-headquartered Super.com has officially become a unicorn and, the company says, saved its users more than $1 billion USD ($1.4 billion CAD) in the process.

New $500M AI Travel Company Targets Cruise Sector
July 9, 2026 via Cruise Trade News
IBS Group has launched a vertical AI company purpose-built for the global travel industry, with cruise named as a key sector.

Booking Seeks End to Greek Dominance-Probe Through Commitments
July 8, 2026 via MLex
Accommodation platform Booking has proposed voluntary changes to assuage concerns raised by the Hellenic Competition Commission in a probe over a potential abuse of market power.

Super.com Raises $65M to Grow Membership Program, Advance AI
July 8, 2026 via PhocusWire
San Francisco-based superapp Super.com, which offers travel deals, cashback opportunities and financial tools, has secured $65 million in Series D funding.

Hilton Opens Direct Line to Navan, Cutting Out Corporate Travel Middlemen
July 7, 2026 via Skift
Hilton and Navan have launched a direct booking connection that skips distribution middlemen, giving the hotel group more control over retailing. It’s an early step in a broader corporate travel push to overhaul how road warriors book hotels.

Travel App Hopper to Pay $35M in FTC Settlement Over 'Unfairly' Charging Hidden Fees
July 2, 2026 via TechCrunch
Hopper, the travel app known for its AI-driven flight and hotel price predictions, has agreed to a $35 million settlement following a lawsuit brought by the U.S. Federal Trade Commission (FTC).

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Agoda Rolls Out Suite of New Features Focused on Real-Time Updates and Smarter Trip Planning
July 1, 2026 via Peking Press
Digital travel platform Agoda today announced a series of new features designed to help travelers plan and manage their trips with greater confidence. The latest updates include real-time flight visibility, an enhanced hotel browser, and AI-powered tools that make choosing the right property faster and more intuitive.

Expedia's First IShowSpeed Video Brought Awareness. The Latest Pushes for Bookings
July 1, 2026 via Skift
With a shoppable IShowSpeed video, Expedia is trying to convert creator hype into transactions.

Hackers Leverage Blockchain to Hit Japan's Hotels Through Booking.com Phishing
June 30, 2026 via InfoSecurity Magazine
Cyber threat actors are targeting employees of Booking.com partner accommodations in Japan, using phishing emails that impersonate guest complaints and review requests to trick hotel staff into executing malicious files.

Visa Steps Into Travel - and Into Competition With Its Own Card Issuers
June 29, 2026 via Skift
Visa just officially launch a consumer travel site that competes with the banks that pay Visa to issue their cards. That's the real story here, the structural conflict of a payment network establishing direct relationships with cardholders and entering into the banks' own travel businesses.

MakeMyTrip and Cleartrip Both Just Launched Creator Programs. The Models Are Different - For Now
June 29, 2026 via Skift
Two near-identical launches in five weeks prove that creator-led travel commerce is here. The hard part now is proving that a reel can turn into a booking, and deciding how much the companies are willing to spend before they have that proof.

Posted in Online Travel Update

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