

# On the Road – Highlights from 2014

## PhoCusWright Conference in Los Angeles, CA

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This week finds me at [LA Live](#) in downtown Los Angeles attending this year's [PhoCusWright Conference](#). Those in the hotel industry know LA live well – for the past few years the [JW Marriott at LA Live](#) has served as the host hotel for the industry's annual [ALIS Conference](#). While ALIS is known for bringing together the hotel industry's best and brightest, I would submit that the 1600 plus attendees (from 40 plus countries) at this year's PhoCusWright represent the future of travel and the hotel industry.

The first day of the Conference featured no less than 32 companies (of varying size and age) presenting their newest travel innovations. I sat through many of these presentations, which provided me an incredible look into the future of travel, distribution, the use of travel data and content and other travel innovations. Some key takeaways . . .

- Web transparency (and its many effects) continues – a number of the presentations featured functionality allowing travelers to hold or book a specific rate and then cancel that booking and book at a new, lower rate in the days, weeks or months prior to arrival.
- Content is king – studies of travelers continue to show the value and influence if relevant, superior content – a number of the innovations presented either promoted their content (or access to third party content) or their ability to curate or organize content in a way no one else can (debatable)
- Cloud computing is ubiquitous – if you are in the computing world, you've known this for years.
- The travel experience – from the top of the travel “funnel” through the trip itself is becoming more segmented and bifurcated every day – no wonder hoteliers struggle to get their arms around and control guests' experiences – from inspirational searches, to pre-arrival communications and up-sells, to in-destination marketing, to post-stay feedback and evaluation – there are increasing numbers of industry participants that wish to control the guest's experience.
- Focus on ancillary services continues to grow. Innovators are looking beyond the large air and hotel components of travel to smaller, more fragmented ancillary services and products – rental cars, public transportation, restaurants and travel insurance.

The second day of the Conference featured a number of interesting substantive presentations leading up the afternoon's “keynote” addresses by Cvent, Ctrip, Homeaway and Expedia. Similar presentations are scheduled for the third and final day.

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