

Duff on Hospitality Law

# Online Travel Update: Copolo seeks to capitalize on travelers' growing environmental concerns; Hopper diversifies through "homes"; Airbnb gains traction in traditional hotel room distribution

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This week's Update features a number of stories on short-term rentals, as one established vacation rental platform continues to gain relevance in traditional hotel room distribution while an established travel application looks to diversify into short term rentals. Enjoy.

## New Platform Seeks to Capitalize on Travelers' Growing Environmental Concerns

*("New online travel agency, Copolo, awarded the 2021 Travel & Hospitality Corporate Innovation Award by Plug and Play," January 27, 2022 via PRWeb)*

H.I.S. Group has been awarded Plug and Play's 2021 Travel & Hospitality Corporate Innovation Award for its recently launched sustainability focused online booking platform, Copolo.com. Through its partnership with CHOOSE, Copolo allows travelers booking on its site to offset the carbon emissions produced by their travels. Given travelers' growing concerns regarding the environmental impact of travel (as documented by nearly all recent traveler surveys and annual travel industry predictions), it cannot be long before platforms like Copolo (or at least the benefits that Copolo offers) become more mainstream.

## Hopper Diversifies Through "Homes"

*("Hopper adds rentals with launch of Hopper Homes," January 27, 2022 via Phocus Wire)*

Hopper continues to make travel headlines in 2022. Last week, Hopper announced the addition of a fourth vertical to its mobile booking application - "Homes." Starting January 27, Thursday, the application will allow users to book one of two million professionally-managed (e.g., Sonder and Vacasa) homes and apartments.

The initial inventory covers 90 countries and 90,000 cities, with an emphasis on U.S. urban properties. Although not immediately available to users booking Homes via the application, Hopper's fintech products (for which it receives most of its attention), including flexible cancellation policies and predictive pricing analytics will soon be added. Hopper's loyalty program - Carrott Cash - will also soon be available to users booking Homes via the application, which will entitle users to 1 to 5 percent cash back on their next booking. Hopper plans to make the new inventory available to its B2B customers, including Trip.com, Amadeus and Capital One.

### **Airbnb Gaining Traction in Traditional Hotel Room Distribution**

*("Airbnb gaining share in hotel distribution analysis," January 24, 2022 via Phocus Wire)*

Although the pandemic caused Airbnb to essentially "freeze" its hotel business, a recent distribution study by Siteminder suggests that the home rental platform is slowly climbing the ranks of the top distribution channels in several markets. Over the past year, Airbnb increased its ranking in 12 of the 21 markets evaluated and premiered in three others. From my perspective, Airbnb's growth (and the reported growth of other existing channels and introduction of new channels) will not only benefit consumers, but also suppliers. Siteminder's complete study is available for download [here](#).

Other news:

### **Travel Unicorn Hopper First Came for Expedia. Airbnb Is Next**

*January 27, 2022 via Bloomberg Quint - Stories*

Frederic Lalonde, Chief Executive Officer of travel tech unicorn Hopper Inc., doesn't want to be the next Airbnb Inc. - a company whose name he purposely avoids uttering in conversation. "Pinduoduo," he answers without hesitation when asked which company he'd rather emulate, citing the China-based mobile marketplace that was founded in 2015 and has since swallowed up vast tracts of Asia's e-commerce economy.

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