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Duff on Hospitality Law

OTA & Travel Distribution Update: Hopper focuses on hotel bookings; Amazon's re-entry into travel; Facebook cryptocurrency a possible travel payment solution

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Hopper Focuses on Hotel Bookings

("Hopper ramps up hotel booking with global private rates and price tracking," Phocus Wire on Jun 20, 2019

Over the past few years, we have featured a number of stories about Hopper and its many successes - though primarily in airline bookings. Now, Hopper is seeking to leverage some of that success in its pursuit of hotel bookings. Hopper currently features over 270,000 hotels worldwide and sources rooms from those hotels through both intermediaries and direct supplier relationships. Armed with its price predictive technology, Hopper claims to be able to provide users accurate rate forecasts for the hotels it features as well as unique "private" rates that are otherwise unavailable. Unlike typical booking channels, which generally promote and market their offerings broadly, Hopper derives 90% of its bookings through personalized "private" push notifications that are powered by Hopper's personalization AI.

Amazon's Re-Entry Into Travel

("Alexa, how can I fly to Mumbai?," Reuters Technology on Jun 20, 2019)

The recent news that Amazon has re-entered the travel industry has some in the airline industry concerned. Just when airlines were beginning to make demonstrable progress in creating direct booking relationships with its customers (and bypassing the many intermediaries who seek to control those relationships and charge handsomely for their services), along comes Amazon. While airlines such as AirAsia and easyJet are busy diversifying their products and services, many airlines are ill prepared. Are hoteliers facing a similar fate?

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Facebook Cryptocurrency a Possible Travel Payment Solution

("Facebook's New Libra Cryptocurrency Could Solve Travel Payments Dilemma," Skift Travel News on Jun 18, 2019)

Have you heard of Libra? If you haven't, you should probably take some to get to know Libra and understand its potential effects, particularly in travel. Even before its launch (which is expected in 2020), Libra has garnered the support of Mastercard, Visa, Paypal, Uber, Lyft and yes, Booking Holdings (Priceline, Booking.com and others). From Booking Holdings' perspective (and possibly other global travel industry members), the proposed cryptocurrency could help tackle the growing number of local and regional pay systems. Expect to hear more about Libra in the near future.

Other news:

Booking Holdings CEO: Data-Privacy Compliance Pushes Costs Higher

Street Journal – US Business on Jun 14, 2019

"You have different parts of the world, different legal jurisdictions are coming up with different rules," Mr. Fogel said at The Wall Street Journal's WSJ Tech D.Live conference. "That makes it really hard for a global player. Especially when you have customers who are going to all these different jurisdictions. Which ones apply? How do you do it?" Different data-privacy plans have emerged in major economies in recent years and it isn't likely that they will converge soon. That has left multinational companies scrambling to be in compliance.

Posted in OTA Update

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