

Duff on Hospitality Law

## Online Travel Update: Google's Cookie Policy Update, Shifts in Sustainable Travel Interest, and the Reality of Online Group Bookings

By Greg Duff on 4.30.24 | Posted in Online Travel Update

This week's Update again features a wide variety of stories, including an important update on the much beleaguered spokesman for metasearch site, Trivago. Enjoy.

- **Google Again Delays Demise of Third-Party Cookies.** Good news for online marketers using third party cookies via Google Chrome. Google has again delayed its planned elimination of third-party cookies – this time until early 2025. Google's recent announcement is the third such delay since announcing in 2020 that it would be eliminating third party cookies within two years. Google attributes its latest delay to two primary factors – (1) advertisers, which have been up in arms over the planned elimination and its likely effects and (2) regulators, primarily the UK's Competition and Markets Authority (CMA), which has expressed concern over the elimination and its potentially anti-competitive effects.
- **Sustainable Travel Options Not As Important As Originally Thought?** For several weeks now, we've featured stories detailing online travel platforms' sustainability efforts. Now comes a report from Booking.com suggesting that sustainable travel options may not be that important to travelers. In short, while the majority of travelers (84%) may say that having and making sustainable travel choices may be important to them, it isn't a priority. In fact, many of the survey's respondents (28%) reported that they are weary of even hearing about climate change. Approximately a third of the respondents reported that they thought that climate change damage had already occurred. As for who should bear responsibility for doing something about climate change, almost half responded that governments (44%) or travel companies (43%) should be responsible (and not individual travelers). The Booking.com survey results mirror many of the findings of other research in the area, including a survey conducted earlier this year by [Phocuswire](#).
- **Instant Online Group Bookings – Fact or Fiction?** For those of you who have been to one of my presentations on online distribution, you know that I typically end my presentation with a brief overview of what we see in the distribution world in the months

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or years ahead. For several years now, online group bookings (and online group booking tools) have made our list. But now, years after the somewhat anticlimactic introduction of many of these online tools and platforms – think Bizly, Groupize, CVENT's Instant Book and lodging industry backed Groups360 (as well as the many direct booking tools introduced by many of the large lodging operators) - the future of online group bookings may be farther away than we first expected. According to a recent survey by *Business Travel News* (BTN), there are several factors hindering the option of these online platforms – among them (1) the inherent power and benefits of legacy RFPs, (2) lack of appropriate inventory and (3) company procurement guidelines requiring competitive bids.

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### **WEX Signs Agreement with Leading Online Travel Platform Booking.com**

*April 25, 2024 via Business Wire*

Continuation of long-standing partnership demonstrates strength and reliability of WEX's enterprise-grade technology platform, flexibility through co-development of proprietary travel payment solutions, geographic reach, and deep payments industry expertise, the global commerce platform that simplifies the business of running a business, today announced that it has reached ...

### **Google is dragging its feet on killing third-party cookies yet again**

*April 25, 2024 via Yahoo Tech*

What you need to know Google's plan to eliminate third-party cookie trackers has been postponed until next year. The UK's Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) has raised concerns about Google's new technology, Privacy Sandbox, potentially favoring Google and disrupting competition.

### **Tripadvisor's Potential Sale: Apollo Still a Suitor and a Financing Deadline**

*April 24, 2024 via Skift*

There will be a lot of moving pieces over the next few months if indeed a sale of Tripadvisor gets done. More than two months after Tripadvisor formed an independent committee to mull a potential sale, there has been silence from both controlling shareholder ...

### **Travelers Say They Want Sustainable Options – But It's Not the Top Priority**

*April 22, 2024 via Skift Travel News*

The survey encapsulates a seeming dilemma for the travel industry. What proportion of their resources should they pour into promoting sustainable travel choices when a wide swath of travelers aren't focused on the issue. For more than a decade, travel companies have been saying sustainability ...

### **Klarna expands global partnership with Expedia Group, offering flexible payments to US consumers**

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*April 22, 2024 via Cision*

Klarna, the AI powered global payments network and shopping assistant, today announced the expansion of its partnership with Expedia Group to the US market. Klarna is now bringing its flexible payment offerings to millions of travelers ...

### **Instant Booking for Meetings — The Long Chase**

*April 21, 2024 via Business Travel News*

Even amid a growing slate of direct booking technology solutions for small meetings, many corporate meetings buyers are not ready to let go of the request-for-proposals process, but overall tech penetration into the small meeting space has significant room for growth.

### **What Happened to the Trivago Guy?**

*April 21, 2024 via Skift*

Will AI replace the Tim Williams (Trivago Guy) and William Shatner (the Priceline Negotiator) types? Could be. Trivago, meanwhile, is already testing a second AI-infused commercial.