

## Digital Markets Act

### Background

#### What is it about

• DMA regulates gatekeeper power of large digital companies

### How we got here?

- Content-related sector-specific legislation
- Courts and legislation
- Increasing market power and concentrations/mergers/acquisitions

### Where are we?

- Compliance stage
- New gatekeeper designations upcoming



## Digital Markets Act

What is a gatekeeper? Broadly speaking

### **Market Capitalization**

• EUR 75 billion in the last financial year

OR

#### Revenue

7,5 billion in each of the last three financial years

### Number of business and end users

- 10 000 yearly active business users
- 45 million monthly active end users

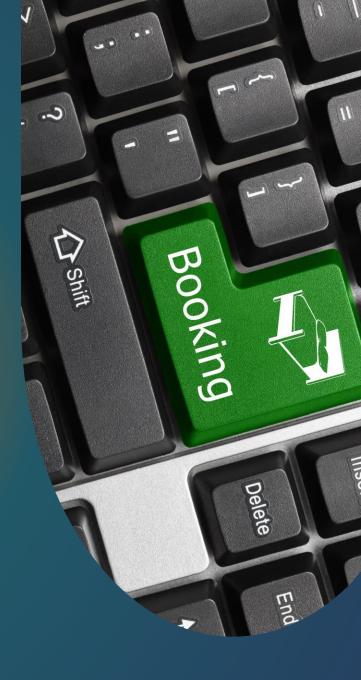


# Digital Markets Act

Why is it important for hospitality sector?

Booking.com





# Agenda – Part I

### **Google Search**

11:00 – 11:15 / Google Search - Welcome and setting the scene Markus Luthe, IHA CEO and Chair of the Distribution Working Group / Matej Zezlin, Public Affairs Manager, HOTREC (moderator)

11:15-12:00 / Presentations and discussion

- M. Javier Delgado Muerza, Managing Partner & CEO EMEA, Mirai
- Roland Schegg, Professor of Tourism at HES-SO Valais, Switzerland
- HOTREC member(s) (Members are invited to volunteer to share their experience)



What do we know?

- Hotel websites pushed down the search order
- OTAs/metasearch given better visibility and position
- Decrease of clicks to direct websites
- Decrease of direct hotel websites visibility from organic search
- Decrease in revenue

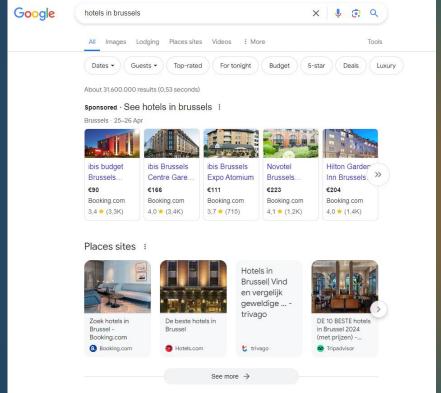


What changed?

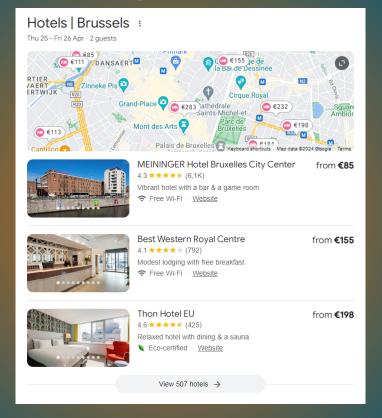
A lot...



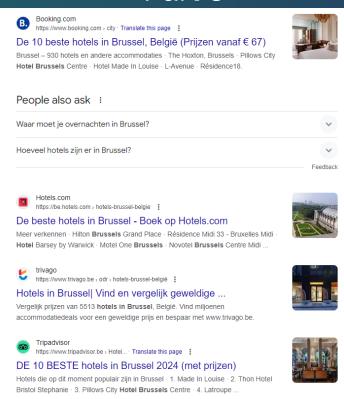
Part 1



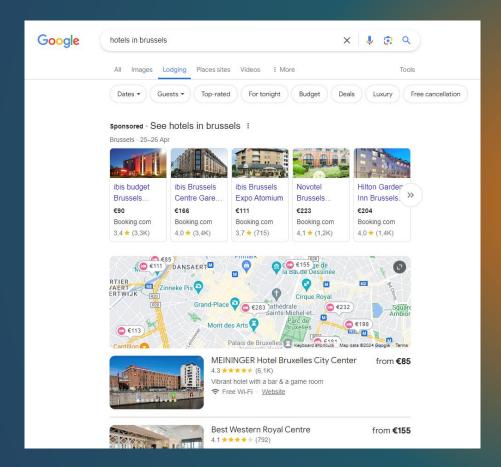
Part 2



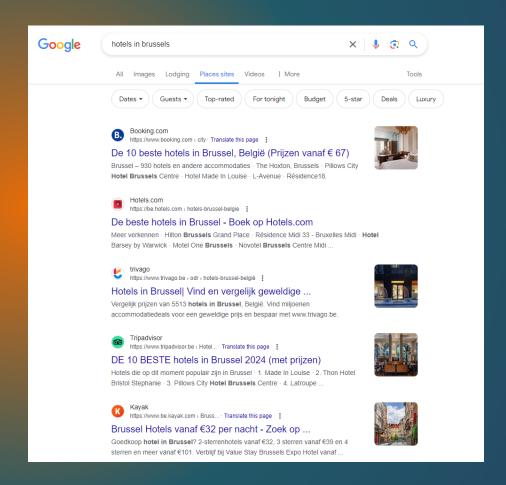
### Part 3



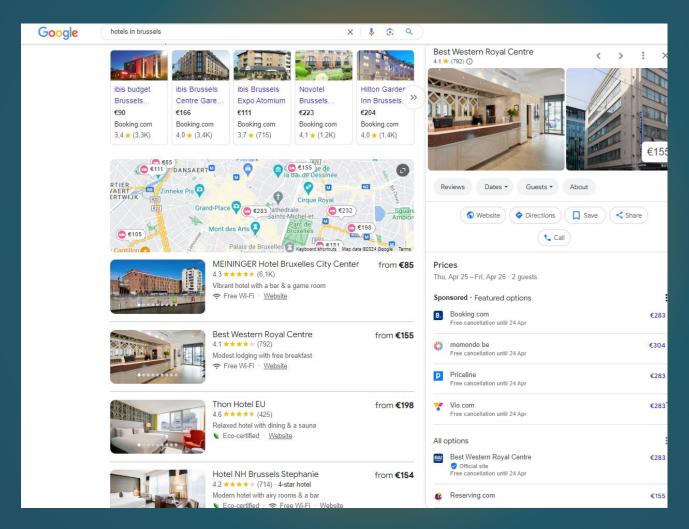
Lodging



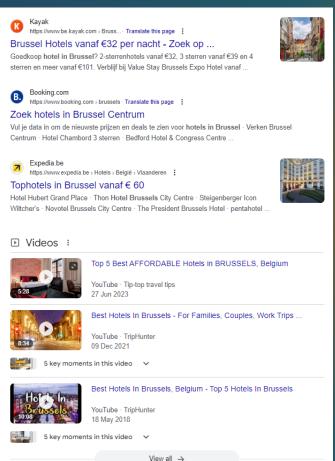
### Places Sites

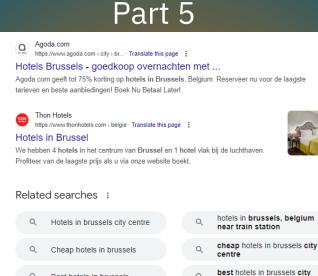


Hotel "profile"



Part 4





#### Sponsored Rocco Forte Hotels https://www.roccofortehotels.com Hotel Amigo in Brussels | Official Website | 5 Star Hotel Discover the heart of Brussels from Hotel Amigo's unbeatable Grand-Place location. Book. Sponsored

brussels hotels 5-star

https://www.nh-hotels.com > brussels > great-offers NH Hotels in Brussels | Incredible Hotel Deals

Best hotels in brussels

Q Luxury hotels in brussels

Book direct on the official site to get the best price guaranteed. Instant confirmation. Book...

### Part 6





Welkom op de officiële website van The Hotel Brussels! Een uitstekend luxehotel op een van de meest exclusieve locaties in Brussel, vlak bij de Louizalaan.



HotelsCombined https://www.hotelscombined.com > ... > Brussels Hotels



3 stars ; Bedford Hotel & Congress Centre · Good 7.9. Rue du Midi 135, Brussels, Belgium; Best Western City Centre · Good 7.2. Square Victoria Regina 9, Brussels,



NH Hotel Group

https://www.nh-hotels.com > hotels · Translate this page



Als u een hotel zoekt dat goed bereikbaar is vanaf het vliegveld, is NH Brussels Airport misschien de beste keuze voor u. Dit hotel ligt op slechts 15 minuten ..



https://www.ihq.com > Home > Explore > Belgium

Top 12 Hotels in Brussels, Belgium by ...

View Brussels hotels available for your next trip. IHG offers great rates on 12 in Brussels with flexible cancellation fees. Whether you're traveling for .



MEININGER Hotels

https://www.meininger-hotels.com > ... · Translate this page

Bruxelles City Center - Brussel

MEININGER Hotel Bruxelles City Center biedt overnachtingen aan in moderne kamers tegen betaalbare hostelprijzen en goede verbindingen met het centrum van .

\*\*\* Rating: 4.5 · 8.447 votes · Price range: Goedkope moderne kamers in Brussel ①





# The role of search and meta-search in the hotel reservation process: insights from empirical studies

Breakout session on Google Search / DMA

April 26, 2024, Budapest

**Roland Schegg** 

Institute of Tourism, HES-SO Valais-Wallis, Switzerland roland.schegg@hevs.ch













### **AGENDA**

- Booking trends among tourists (insights form empirical studies)
- Trends among global distribution players (OTA)
- Metasearch in the European hotel industry (HOTREC survey)
- Conclusions









## Study "Living and travelling in the digital age": Survey on the information and booking behaviour of travellers in Switzerland, Germany and France



**Exploratory study** from 2021/2022 based on an online **survey**.

### **Participants:**

 A total of 965 respondents: 346 from Switzerland, 305 from Germany, and 314 from France.













## Information sources for travel by age



	Less than	From 30	From 40	From 50	From 60	70 and	Total
	30	to 39	to 49	to 59	to 69	more	
on the Internet	68.2%	69.3%	72.3%	72.8%	74.9%	75.2%	72.1%
Destination website	55.3%	54.6%	53.8%	51.9%	55.4%	56.0%	54.3%
From friends / family	48.5%	41.7%	42.8%	39.8%	34.9%	35.8%	40.5%
On booking portals (Booking, Tripadvisor, etc.)	40.2%	44.2%	37.0%	39.3%	37.7%	<b>25.7%</b>	38.0%
On social networks	<u>55.3%</u>	<u>42.3%</u>	30.6%	23.8%	<u>9.7%</u>	<u>5.5%</u>	27.9%
Magazine / travel guide	26.5%	25.8%	20.8%	23.8%	26.3%	27.5%	24.8%
Mobile app	32.6%	<u>35.0%</u>	28.3%	<u>18.0%</u>	21.1%	<u>12.8%</u>	24.7%
Tourist office (visit or phone)	14.4%	19.6%	22.0%	21.8%	<u>29.7%</u>	29.4%	22.8%
Travel agencies	25.0%	23.3%	18.5%	21.4%	18.9%	27.5%	21.9%
Brochures	14.4%	<u>14.1%</u>	14.5%	19.9%	<u>31.4%</u>	<u>33.9%</u>	20.9%
Tour operator catalogs	15.2%	13.5%	16.2%	18.9%	21.1%	<u>35.8%</u>	19.3%
Media reports	13.6%	12.3%	17.3%	20.4%	18.9%	16.5%	16.8%
Advertisements	11.4%	8.6%	8.7%	12.6%	9.1%	7.3%	9.8%
Visit of a trade fair / fair dedicated to travel	6.1%	<u>1.8%</u>	4.0%	6.8%	5.7%	7.3%	5.2%
No information taken	3.0%	1.8%	4.6%	6.3%	5.7%	5.5%	4.6%
Other	1.5%	0.6%	1.2%	1.0%	1.7%	<u>4.6%</u>	1.6%













## Usual booking channel for accomodation by age





	Less than 30	From 30 to 39	From 40 to 49	From 50 to 59	From 60 to 69	70 and more
Directly from the accommodation	<u>25.0%</u>	<u>22.1%</u>	33.5%	35.1%	39.8%	<u>49.5%</u>
via an internet reservation portal (Booking, Expedia, AirBnB, etc.)	<u>57.6%</u>	<u>57.7%</u>	42.8%	43.4%	<u>37.4%</u>	<u>24.8%</u>
Travel agency / tour operator	<u>7.6%</u>	11.0%	16.8%	12.2%	13.5%	17.4%
Tourist Office	2.3%	<u>4.9%</u>	0.6%	0.5%	2.3%	2.8%
Reservation made by a relative	<u>6.8%</u>	3.7%	2.3%	2.9%	2.9%	4.6%
Other	0.8%	0.6%	4.0%	<u>5.9%</u>	4.1%	0.9%





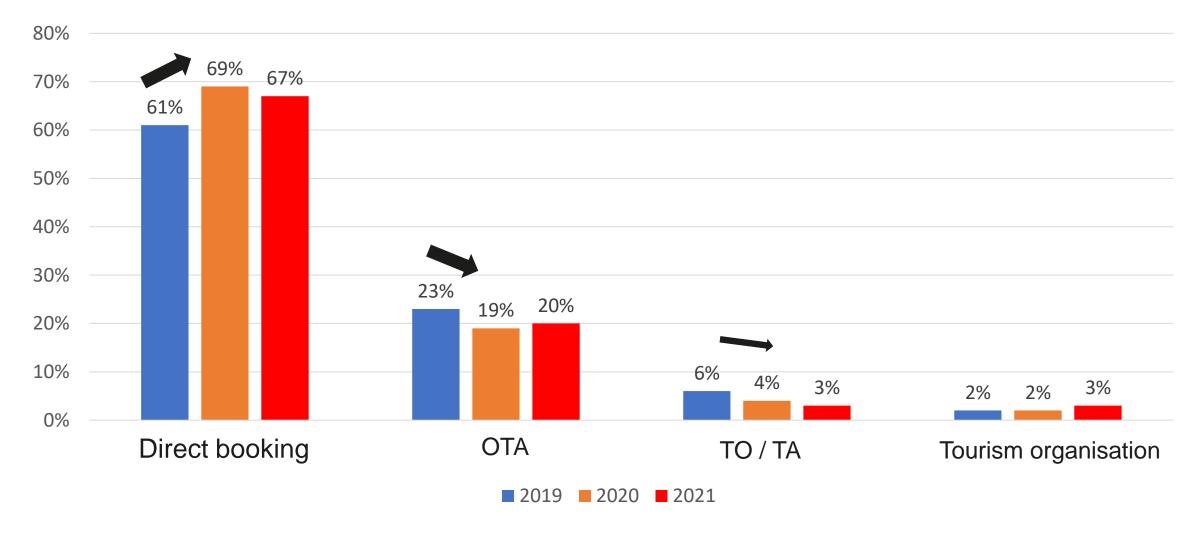






# Guest survey Austria: Booking channels for hotels in the summer seasons 2019 - 2021



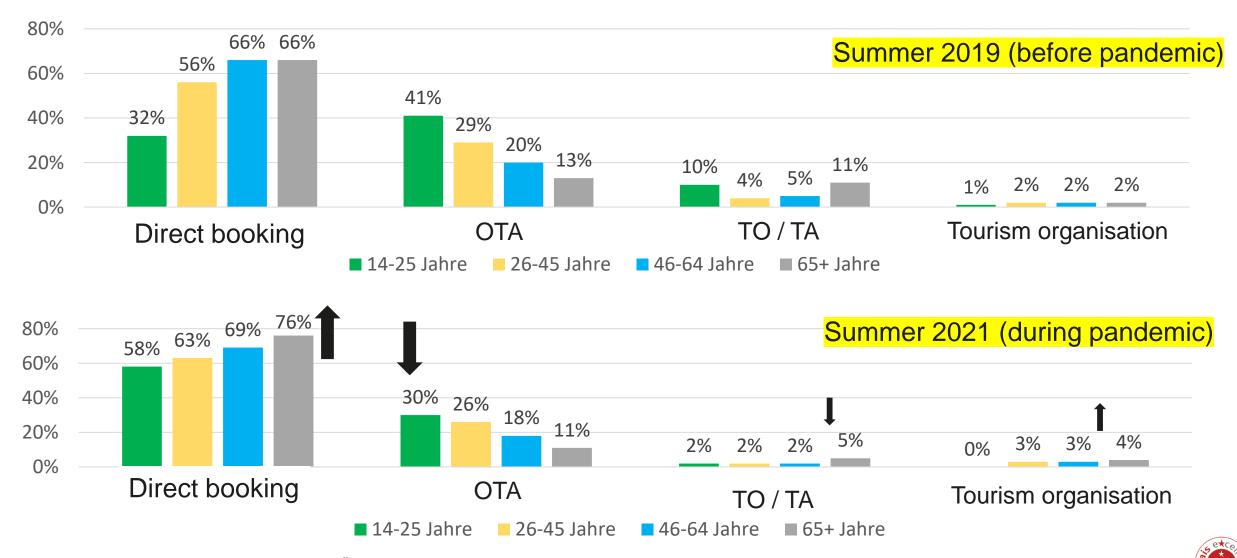






### **Guest survey Austria: Booking channels for hotels in the** summer season 2019 - 2021 by age of guests









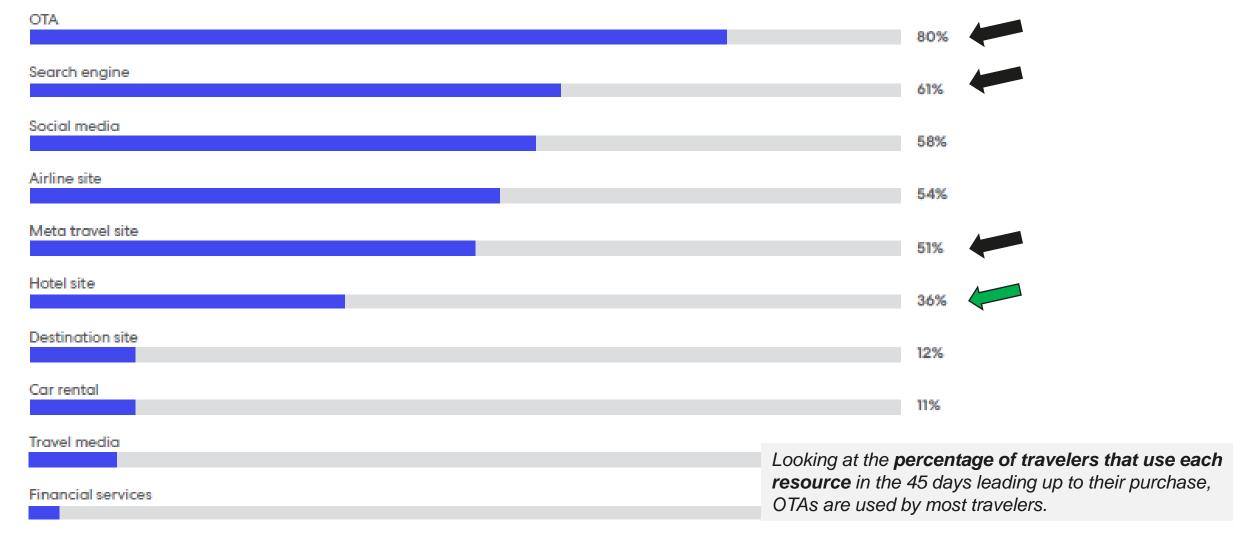






# **Expedia Study - The Path To Purchase: Resources used leading up to a travel purchase**



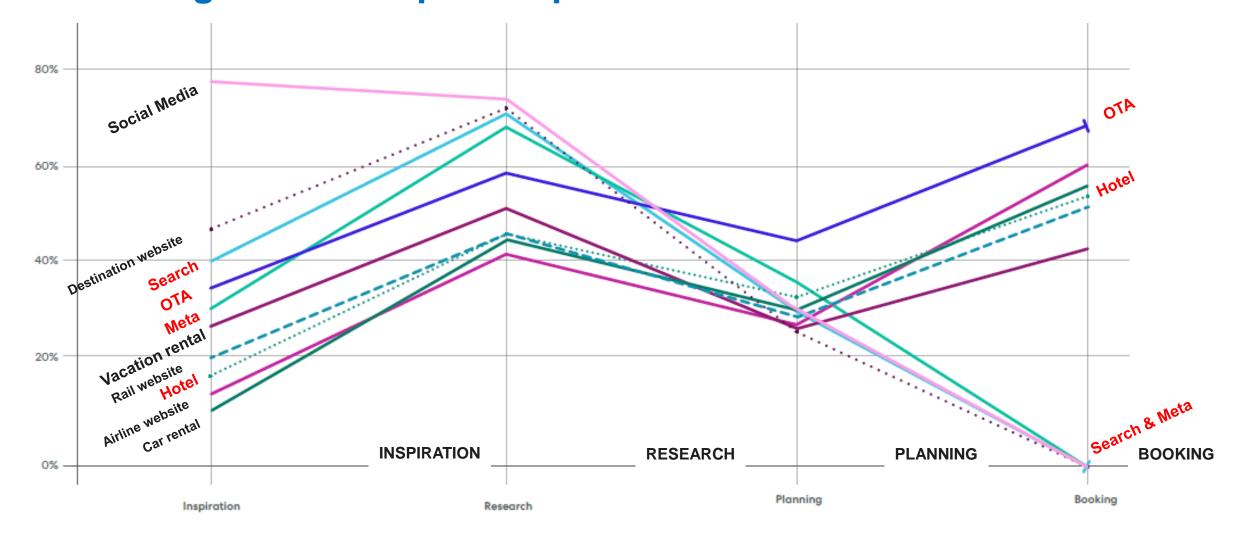






## **Expedia Study - The Path To Purchase: Resources** used throughout travel path to purchase

















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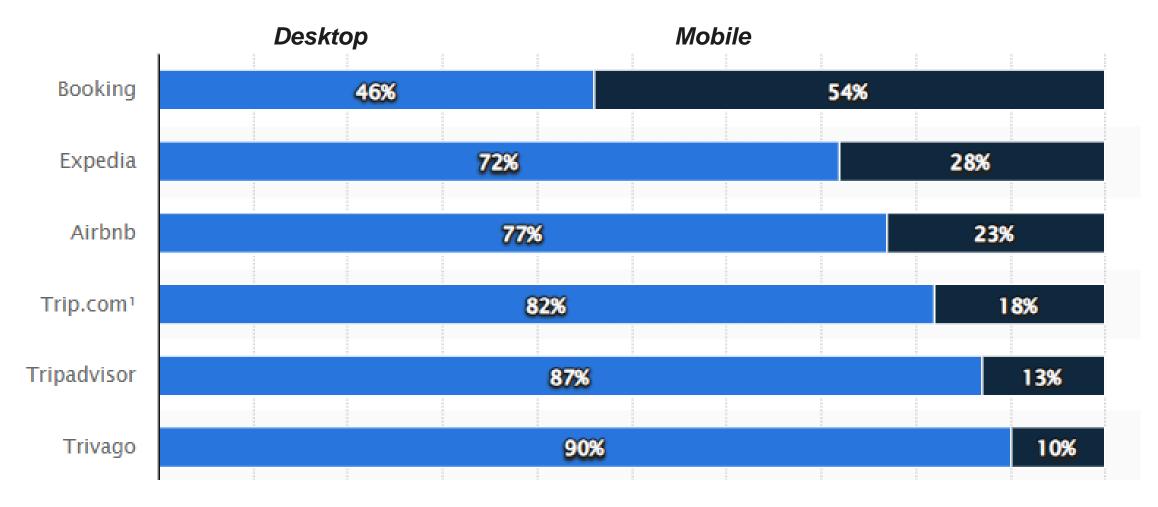


## Strong trend towards bookings via mobile devices



Estimated desktop vs. mobile revenue share of leading online travel agencies (OTAs) worldwide in 2022















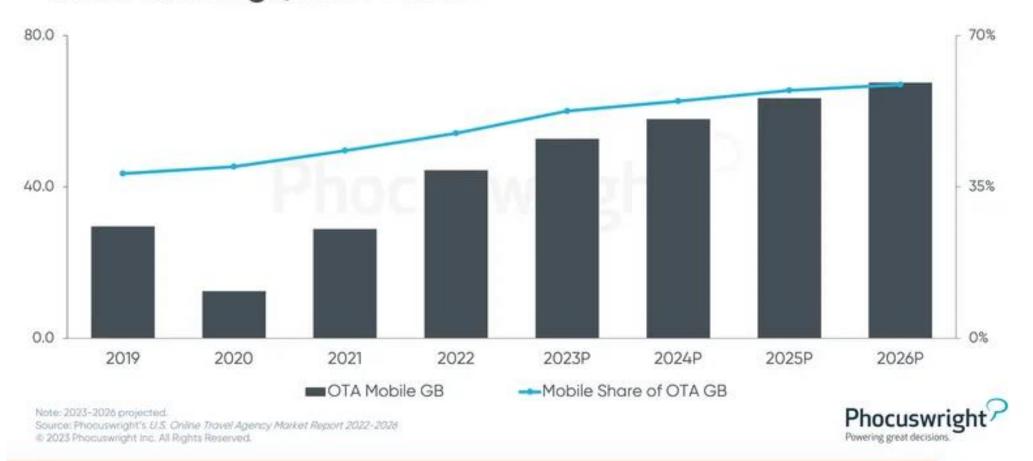


## Strong trend towards bookings via mobile devices





### Mobile Gross Bookings (US\$B) and Share (%) of Total OTA Gross Bookings, 2019-2026



2024: 50% of all OTA bookings via mobile in the USA













# Marketing Spend of global Players (for Google and co)





Financial figures from **Expedia Group**, **Booking Holdings**, **Airbnb** and **Trip.com Group** – four of the largest online travel agencies in the world – show the companies spent a record amount of money to promote their brands and attract customers in 2023, as pent-up demand from the pandemic is still driving spending.

Collectively these four brands spent a staggering \$16.8 billion on sales and marketing last year (reported by Booking Holdings as just marketing), up 20% from just more than **\$14 billion in 2022**.

The two companies account for the majority of the spend among the four brands analyzed, with Expedia Group doling out \$6.9 billion in 2023 for sales and marketing (which includes commissions paid to B2B partners) and Booking Holdings spending a bit less, \$6.8

billion, for its marketing efforts.













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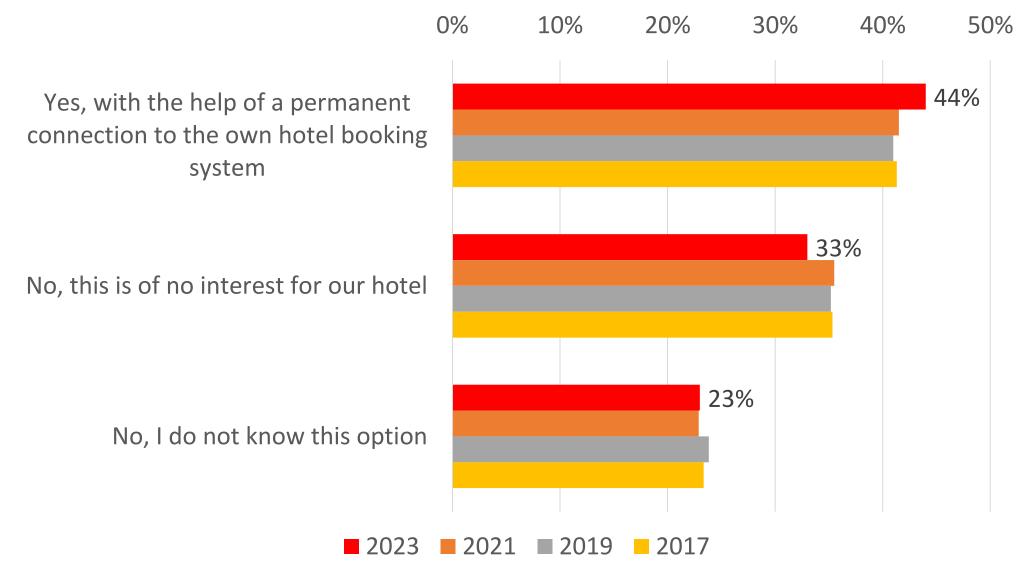






# Are your rates and availabilities accessible with a direct interface with a meta-search engine?

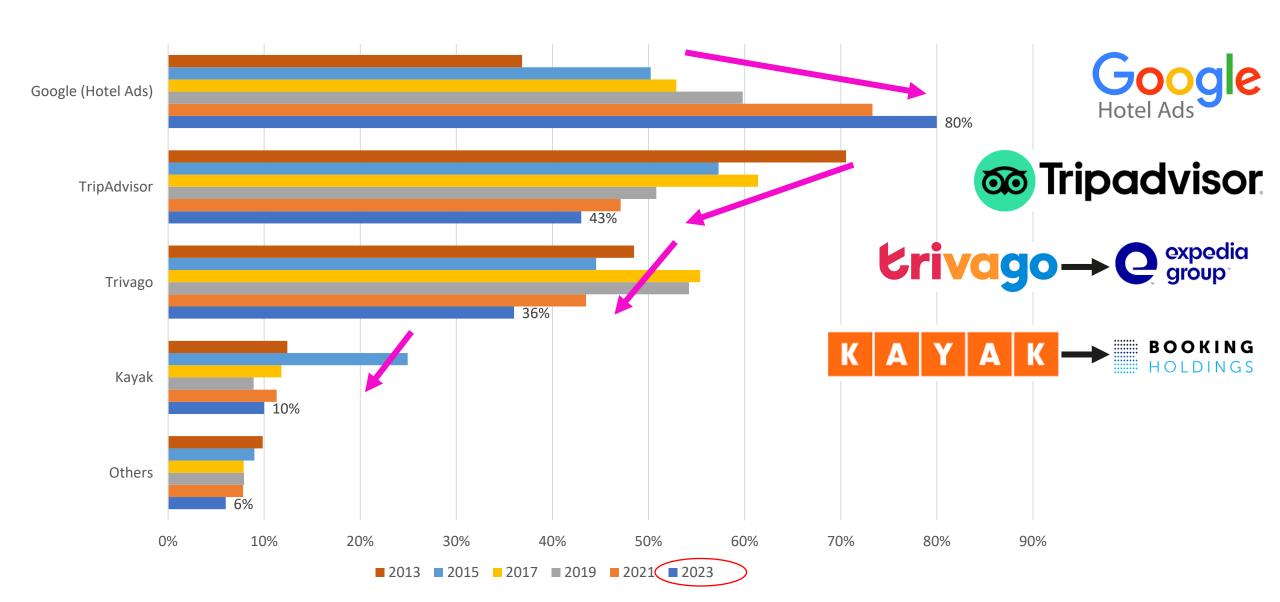








## If you have a permanent connection, with which metasearch engine do you link up?



## Google "eating" meta-search



**Online Travel** 

## How Travel Metasearch Lost Its Mojo

Dennis Schaal, Skift April 1st, 2024 at 5:06 PM EDT

### The Google Factors and Other Reasons for Metasearch Struggles

In an email exchange, Wells Fargo Managing Director Brian Fitzgerald told Skift that heightened competition from Google Hotels and Flights, which attract users at the beginning of their travel searches, is a major factor weighing on Tripadvisor and Trivago.

Fitzgerald sees other issues, too.

Hotels have been able to attract more direct traffic through their loyalty programs: Many offer lower rates on their websites to loyalty program members than on metasearch sites such as Google, Tripadvisor, Kayak and Trivago.

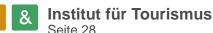
Online travel agencies such as Booking.com and Expedia have their own loyalty programs, and have at times begun offering stiff discounts to attract their own direct traffic. This hurt metasearch platforms even if online travel agencies owned them.













### **AGENDA**

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### **Overall conclusions**



### **Booking channels of the future** are ...

- the booking channels of the past -> no revolution but evolution
- the booking channels of the younger generations -> generation shift
- Direct channels remain important, especially in accommodation
- Mobile bookings (via app) will soon dominate the booking landscape (drivers: new generations / loyalty programmes -> e.g. Genius from Booking)
- Meta-Search: still less than half of hotels use this option. Google has become the dominant player in this area erasing other players













**Questions & Discussion** 













### **Contact Roland Schegg**

University of Applied Ssciences of Western Switzerland Valais-Wallis (HES-SO Valais)

School of Business

Institute of Tourism (ITO)

TechnoPôle 3

CH-3960 Sierre/Siders, Switzerland

Phone +41 (0)58 606 90 83

E-Mail: roland.schegg@hevs.ch

Twitter: @RolandSchegg

LinkedIn: ch.linkedin.com/in/rolandschegg/

University: www.hevs.ch

Tourism Observatory: www.tourobs.ch

Bachelor of Science HES-SO in Tourismus in German, French and English

















## **Backup slides**











# Rapid adoption of innovations: "Al-Powered Travel Planning - Booking.com's Novel Approach"



# Booking.com

## **AI Trip Planner**





enhance the user experience during trip planning



#### Integration:

incorporates OpenAI's ChatGPT API



#### Flexible User Queries:

handle general and specific travel-related queries











## Machine Learning (ML) in the Frontend of Booking.com since more than a decade



10,000,000,000 predictions per day

300+ live ML models

Al is being applied in more and more processes and products - Impacting all departments at Booking.com

400 Al and data scientists at Booking!





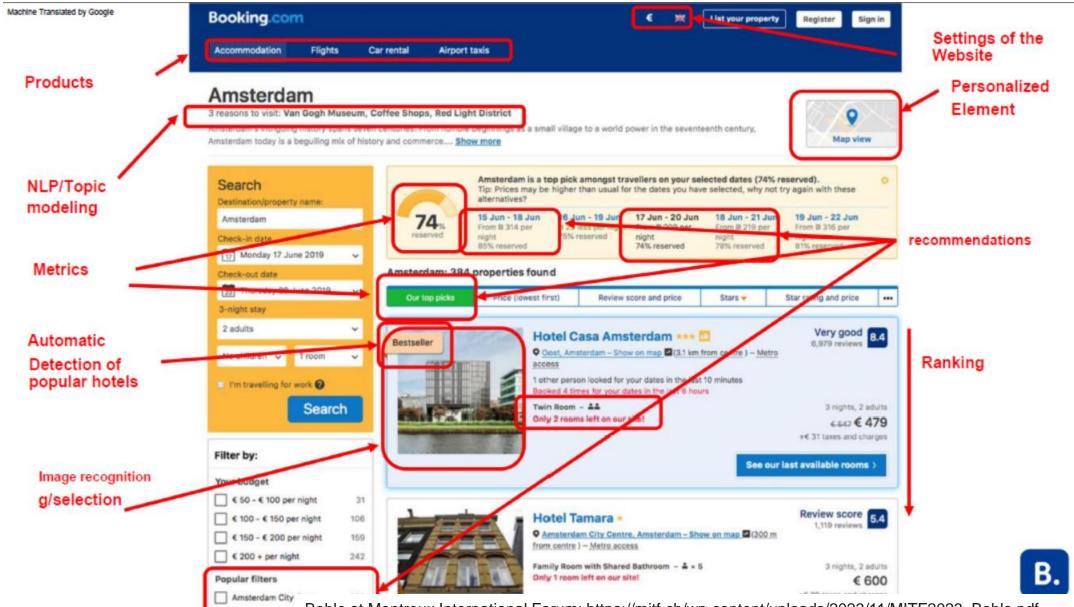




## Machine Learning (ML) in the Frontend of **Booking.com**















# The increased use of advanced AI features by Google, OTAs, and Meta-Search Engines



The **use of Al offers significant competitive advantages** to big players in the hospitality industry, particularly in the following areas:

- **Predictive Analytics for Pricing**: Al allows large players to analyze extensive data sets to predict market demand and adjust pricing strategies in real-time, maximizing revenue potential.
- Personalized Customer Experiences: Big players use AI to personalize the booking experience, recommending hotels, destinations, and services based on the customer's previous behavior, preferences, and other available data, leading to higher conversion rates
- Efficient Distribution Channel Management: Al helps optimize how rooms are allocated across various channels, determining the most profitable mix of direct and third-party bookings, which might be challenging for hotels to manage without similar technology.
- Advanced Market Insights: Through AI, large players gain deep insights into market trends, customer satisfaction, and competitive dynamics, allowing them to make strategic decisions and adapt quickly to market changes
- Enhanced Operational Efficiency: All can automate routine tasks, like customer service inquiries through chatbots, or manage reservations and cancellations, saving on labor costs and increasing efficiency, which is particularly beneficial for larger organizations with vast operations









## Possible negative effects of DMA



- Hotels are concerned about potential negative impacts on their visibility in Google search
   results due to the changes being made in compliance with the DMA
- The feared increase in visibility for OTAs and metasearch engines could result in an increased reliance on these platforms by hotels to gain visibility and bookings -> increase the costs associated with commissions, impacting the overall profitability for hotels.
- Hotels will need to adapt to these changes by potentially investing more in their direct marketing (loyalty programs) and SEO efforts to maintain visibility in search results.
   Additionally, hotels could focus on differentiating their offerings, providing unique and valueadded experiences that can be directly communicated to potential customers, thereby encouraging direct bookings.









# Agenda

### **Booking.com**

12:00 – 12:10 / Booking.com - Setting the scene
Markus Luthe, IHA CEO and Chair of the Distribution Working Group/ Matej Zezlin, Public Affairs Manager, HOTREC

Intervention by Andrea Collart, Partner, Forward Global and Umberto Gambini, Partner, Forward Global

12:10-12:30 / Discussion



# Digital Markets Act - Booking

### Background

### **History:**

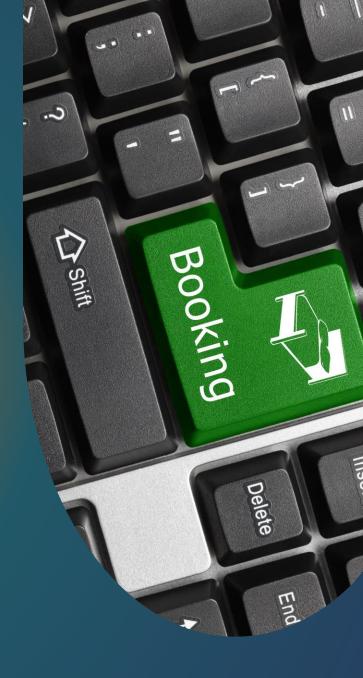
- Over a decade long struggle of European hoteliers
- Courts and legislation

### What happened?

Booking unsuccessfully lobbied against the scope of the DMA

#### Where are we?

- Close to designation Mid May 2024
- Ensuring compliance and "getting it right"



# Digital Markets Act - Booking

### Key issues

- Ban on all price parity clauses
  - Hotels should be allowed to offer better prices on their direct distribution channels
- Ban on self-preferencing
  - Listing should include a link to the direct website of the hotel
- Better access to data generated by listing
  - Access to data such as email address and phone number
  - Other types of data? Hotels chains
- Allow access to national courts
  - Hotels should be able to complain about ALL infringements in front of national courts
- Do not force hotels to opt in for payment services
  - Hotel should not be forced to use Booking's payment services and should offer alternatives

