

Duff on Hospitality Law

Online Travel Update: Google's Shift on Cookies & Booking.com's Legal Scrape

By Greg Duff on 7.29.24 | Posted in Online Travel Update

Good Sunday morning from Seattle . . . Our weekly Online Travel Update for the week ending Friday, July 26, 2024, is below. It was a relatively quiet week this past week in the online travel industry, at least until Google's (not surprising) announcement. Enjoy.

- **Google Changes Direction Again.** So much for those many sessions (including my own) at recent industry conferences regarding marketing in a post-cookie world . . . Google announced this past week that it is abandoning entirely its previously announced decision to end all use of third-party cookies. The announcement comes after multiple prior announcements by Google delaying the planned demise. So why the change? While Google's announcement didn't go into great detail, previous delays by Google (particularly the most recent) have been attributed to ongoing regulatory review of Google's planned alternative – the Privacy Sandbox – by both privacy and competition regulators. So, what is next? Again, the announcement did not go into great detail, except to say that users will soon have a choice regarding their web browsing practices. Google's proposed alternatives are now under review by regulators.
- **Booking.com Found to Have Unlawfully Scraped Airline Website.** In a unanimous decision out of a Delaware federal court this past week, a jury found that Booking.com unlawfully scraped data from travel supplier (and sometimes instigator) Ryanair. Booking.com's activities were found to violate the U.S. Computer Fraud and Abuse Act. While the damages awarded to Ryanair were nominal (\$5,000), the decision should provide a basis for Ryanair (and possibly other travel suppliers) to pursue injunctive relief against future similar behavior. Booking.com plans to appeal the decision.

Have a great week.

[Google no longer removing third-party cookies, new Chrome experience planned](#)

July 23, 2024 via Phocus Wire

Travel brands and other e-commerce sellers have been focused on developing first-party data strategies since Google first announced it would put an end to third-party cookies in 2020.

Jury Finds Booking.com Owes Ryanair \$5K For Data Scraping

July 19, 2024 via foster.com

Irish discount airline Ryanair has convinced a Delaware federal jury to find that online travel website giant Booking.com should pay \$5,000 for using screen scraping software in a way that ran afoul of computer fraud laws, which the airline likened to "internet piracy."