Promoting Electronic Distribution throughout the Hotel Industry

The GDS Trainer's Guide

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What is HEDNA?

The Hotel Electronic Distribution Network Association (HEDNA) emerged in 1991 in response to the hotel industry's need to represent itself within the computerized travel reservation environment. Our purpose and goals are identified in the HEDNA mission statement:

To increase hotel industry revenues and profitability from electronic distribution channels. This will be done by:

1. *Optimizing the use of current technology*
2. *Influencing development of current and emerging electronic distribution channels*
3. *Education*
4. *Providing an opportunity for open exchange among members.*

To find out more about HEDNA or about GDS education contact:

HEDNA Executive Director
333 John Carlyle Street, Suite 600
Alexandria, VA 22314
Phone: 703-518-4178 Fax: 703-548-1264
E-mail: info@hedna.org OR

1 Markham Mews, Broad Street
Wokingham, Berks
RG40 1AB
Phone: +44 (0) 118-989-2255
Fax: +44 (0) 118-989-2277
E-mail: hedna@hsss.com

Or visit our Web site at: www.hedna.org

Introduction to the GDS Trainer's Guide

This guide was produced by representatives from a number of specialties from inside the hotel industry as well as representatives from the GDSs. The guide provides brief descriptions of the various topics including types of hotel organizations, connectivity, booking process and flow, PNR messaging, and commission payment. In addition, the section "If At First You Don't Succeed - Problem Solving and Assisting with Travel Agent 'Challenges'" attempts to answer frequent travel agent questions concerning the GDS hotel booking process.

In preparing this Guide, HEDNA felt that it would provide GDS Travel Agent trainers with a simple explanation of key issues and processes specific to the hotel industry.

Travel Agents and the GDSs

Today the travel marketplace is a global arena with hundreds of thousands of buyers (travel agents) and sellers (hotels, airlines, car rental companies, etc.) working with each other to reserve and deliver services to the ultimate buyer -- the traveler. Increasingly, the “shelves” on which the buyers look for those travel services are the world’s global distribution systems (GDSs).

The benefits to travel agents of using your GDS include the following:

- Saves money
  - Minimizes expenses to book hotels since no long distance telephone charges are incurred and increases productivity with no “on-hold” time.
  - Gains productivity rebates depending on contract with GDS.
  - Wins client loyalty by booking a rate that meets the clients needs -- such as weekend, corporate, package, contractual (negotiated), etc. -- in a timely and accurate way.

- Saves time and increases productivity
  - Facilitates search time by using selection parameters (such as address, distance to major reference point, rate, etc.) to pre-qualify hotels.
  - Data on thousands of hotels are available to shop for rates and availability.
  - Lessens manual commission tracking as the GDSs provide back office accounting systems.
  - Provides audit trail of reservation history to assist in resolving rate and booking disputes.
  - Increases amount and accuracy of information provided to clients.
  - Processes inquiries and bookings 24 hours a day -- especially important if a destination is located several time zones away.
  - On-line updating provides more accurate information than printed material.

Hotels -- Are They All the Same?

Hotels and hotel groups that appear in the GDSs are not operated or managed in the same way. The differences in structure and operation can affect how bookings get to individual properties and the way in which they respond to queries. Broadly speaking, "hotels" operations fall into six categories: chains, franchises, consortia, representation companies, third party reservation service providers and individual properties.

Chains

Chains are collections of hotels that are either wholly owned by one organization or have strong management agreements dictating how each hotel will operate. They are strongly branded and their sales, marketing and reservations operations are controlled through a single central management point. This central control allows the chain to impose uniform operational procedures on individual properties.

All hotels in a chain may have the same brand name or the hotel chain may offer a number of brand names. For example, the Hyatt Hotel chain offers four brand names Hyatt Hotels, Hyatt Regency Hotels, Grand Hyatt and Park Hyatt.

Franchises

Franchises are also collections of individual hotels who align themselves to a brand name and, in return for franchise fees receive marketing, purchasing and reservation management services. While central control may be more limited than in chain hotels, franchises generally offer reservation system capabilities similar to chain hotels. Examples of franchise hotels are Best Western, Days Inn, and Howard Johnson's.

What difference does this make to the travel agent?

Because of central control, information in the GDSs is usually comprehensive and up-to-date. Policies and procedures are similar or identical for each property in the chain or the franchise.

Hotel Consortia

Consortia are collections of hotels that buy the services of a central organization for those activities which provide a savings or benefit from that combined effort (i.e. marketing, sales, purchasing, reservations management). Central control and conformity with group policy tend to be less strong than that of chain or franchise operations. The central organization may only have a small portion of each hotel's rooms to sell. This room allotment may be amended or totally withdrawn by the property at will.

What difference does this make to the travel agent?

Delivery of reservations to a consortium's member property may be faxed and there may be one or more manual stages for a reservation before it becomes part of a hotel's records. This may take more time and be subject to more human intervention than a chain or franchise reservation. Likewise, the response to any queries and resolution of problems may be longer since the individual property may need to be consulted.

Representation Companies

Representation companies provide a variety of services to independent hotels or small hotel groups. Without representation companies, independent hotels or very small groups could not sell their rooms in the GDSs on a cost effective basis.

Representation companies function to market and sell hotel accommodation. Hotels using their services normally pay a commission on rooms sold and, in some cases, a marketing fee.

A hotel might wish to be represented by more than one organization or may choose one company over another because of the services a representation company offers. While some companies provide only GDS representation service and commit to little or no outside sales activities, other representation companies offer worldwide sales operations and generate bookings via their own reservation centers as well as via the GDSs. Some representation companies offer their services only to independent, luxury hotels while others might limit their services to one geographic area. Examples of representation companies are Utell and SRS.

What difference does this make to the travel agent?

Most representation companies offer capabilities that make their clients similar to hotel chains in terms of reservation delivery, problem solving, etc. Some representation companies may have a manual interface with some of the properties they represent. This may mean receipt and processing of availability updates and reservations delivery will take longer than for chain or franchise hotels. At times, the loading of information for these properties in the GDSs can be also slower. Finally, when problems arise, person-to-person negotiations between the representation company and a hotel may be necessary.

Standards and procedures established by the representation company on behalf of its member hotels also may vary. Some representation companies do have strong control over their member properties and have authority to make decisions on their clients' behalf. There are many others who have more limited technical resources and less structural control over their hotel members.

Third Party Service Providers

Some hotel companies, because of staff or technology limitations, choose not to support their own central reservations systems, voice centers or GDS connectivity. They turn to companies that provide one or all of these services. In some cases, hotels turn to representation companies to provide these services. Other use companies known as third party service providers. Examples of third party service providers include: VIP International, Lexington, Unirez and Trust International. While all representation companies can be thought of as third party service providers, not all third party service providers offer the full range of services offered through representation companies.

What difference does this make to the travel agent?

This function is transparent to the travel agents as hotels are represented under their own GDS codes. The agent needs to understand that another party may be acting between the holder of the GDS code and the agent. For example, this may mean that a queue address may be shared between several hotel chains.

Switch Companies

To connect a hotel chain, representation company or consortia reservation system to each of the GDSs requires sophisticated equipment and skillful programming. The cost of individual connections to each GDS can be too expensive and technically challenging for many organizations. Through the use of a communication switch company, a hotel chain, for example, needs only one connection -- to the switch -- rather than several connections to the individual GDSs.

To meet this need, two companies have developed "switches" that pass the data between GDSs and Central Reservation Systems (and Offices). These two companies are Pegasus Solutions and WizCom International. Pegasus Solutions, previously called THISCO, was founded in 1989 by 16 hotel companies and offer the UltraSwitch communication link. WizCom International, a subsidiary of Cendant, began in 1987 to provide GDS and reservation services through their ResAccess link.

Some lodging groups have made the decision to develop and maintain GDS/CRS links themselves and do not use the switch companies.

What difference does this make to the travel agent?

For all intents and purposes, none. Whether a booking, queue message or seamless availability check goes via Pegasus Solutions or WizCom is transparent to the travel agent. The response received on the travel agent's GDS terminal is the standard response which relies on the GDS and the hotel chain's central reservation system functionality.

Connectivity

Only several years ago, all hotel companies had manual links to global distribution systems. Reservations were delivered to a queue, from which they were manually extracted, processed and a confirmation or denial message entered into the GDS.

Since that time more sophisticated connectivity options -- Type B, Type A, seamless connectivity and next generation seamless, -- have become available and have been adopted where hotel companies feel appropriate. It is important to note that hotel companies may use any one of the links available and some companies have different links with one GDS than they do with another.

Link	What difference does it make to the travel agent?
Manual Reservation Processing In manual processing, the reservation message is delivered to a queue in the GDS and maintained by the hotel company's CRO. Staff retrieves the queued message manually, make the necessary reservation request in their reservation system and receive the confirmation number. Then, they update the hotel booking confirmation field in the hotel Segment of the PNR.	Manual processing requires more time to be completed. A travel agent can expect to wait longer before a confirmation is delivered.
Type B Reservation Processing Type B (or teletype) connections work via ARInc or SITA data communications lines and can be compared to sending a fax -- you know your message has been received but have to wait for a response. Type B connectivity allows for greater speed and convenience for travel agents over manual processing. With Type B links, the confirmation number is updated in the PNR and placed in the travel agent's queue generally within minutes to a few hours after completing the reservation depending on the hotel company's operational procedures.	The travel agent has to complete the hotel booking request, end the transaction and re-display the PNR to determine if the reservation has been confirmed. Type B communication is used as a "fall-back" procedure for hotel companies using Type A processing when a Type A link is down for maintenance, for example. On occasion, every hotel company that uses Type A links will revert to Type B. This explains why it is possible to receive confirmation numbers immediately during one transaction while for another at the same hotel there is an longer confirmation delivery time.

Type A Reservation Processing Type A connections use a dedicated telephone line and provide interactive confirmation processing. It can be compared to talking to someone on the telephone -- you send your message and receive a reply almost immediately without having to end the record. Most hotel companies operate on Type A connections to the GDS.	Type A connectivity works in "real time". It provides an immediate response allowing travel agents to receive their hotel reservation confirmation number within about 7 seconds. Advantages of Type A Connectivity: • Confirmation speed – about 7 seconds or less • Interactive processing and error response
Seamless Connectivity Seamless connectivity is an advanced connection for displaying interactive data. It is one of the most advanced form of link between a hotel company's CRS and the GDS. Reservation processing is still Type A, but the messaging standards are usually newer and more efficient. Additionally, interactive modifications and cancellations are usually included in this level of connectiivty.	Seamless connectivity allows much of the room description, rate, booking rules and availability data displayed to a travel agent through their GDS to be gathered directly from the hotel company's central reservation system. Advantages of Seamless Connectivity: • Viewing information drawn directly from CRS • Confirmation speed • Real-time information • More information and more accurate information • Information is less cryptic - more user-friendly language

Next Generation Seamless Not yet available with all GDS, these products will enhance and build upon classic Seamless Connectivity (above) to allow seamless data to be displayed on the multi-property, hotel list/availability displays.	Next Generation Seamless products will make the 'shopping' displays in GDSs more accurate with real time seamless data and will aid the selection process thus improving the first step in the shopping/booking process in GDS Advantages of Seamless Connectivity: • Real-time information on the first hotel availability displays • Aleviate misinformation between the multi-hotel availability displays and single hotel displays • Save time by making appropriate hotel selections from the multi-hotel availability display • Save time by manipulating the multi-hotel availability displays to users specific hotel requests/requirements

Booking Process and Flow

Reservation Process from GDS to Hotel CRS

Type A and Type B

After a travel agent makes a booking, it moves from the GDS through some communication link (often a switch company) to the hotel company's central reservation system computer. A confirmation number returns to the travel agent along the same communication link. The speed with which the confirmation number returns to the travel agent can vary from 7 seconds or less (Type A) to minutes or hours (Type B). Upon issuance of the confirmation the reservation is then stored in the hotel CRS for transmission to the property.

Seamless

The process is very similar to a reservation made using a seamless interface. However, when the travel agent views data on their computer screen, they are seeing information drawn directly from the hotel company's reservation system data base rather than information drawn from a separate GDS data base. Upon making a booking, a confirmation message is available immediately to the agent and the reservation is stored in the hotel's CRS until it is communicated to the property.

Reservation Delivery from the CRS to the Hotel Property

The method of reservation delivery from the hotel company reservation system to the hotel varies from company to company, depending on the technology and procedures used. A key element in reservation delivery to the property is the hotel property management system. A property management system (PMS) is a computer installed at the property to control available rooms, reservations and charges by in-house guests.

Some hotels have automatic central reservation system to property management system interfaces. Where such interfaces are in place, bookings are electronically communicated from the central reservation system to the property management system.

In other situations, hotel companies have a remote access terminal installed at each property connected to the central reservation system, allowing delivery of each reservation. Once the reservation has been received at the hotel, a member of the hotel staff enters it into the PMS manually or electronically.

In hotels without property level access to central reservation systems, reservations are delivered via facsimile to the property where they are then manually entered into a PMS.

A second separate confirmation number may be generated from the PMS and can account for the occasions when there are discrepancies between the confirmation number received through the GDS and the confirmation number shown at a hotel on check-in. Most hotel companies, however, can reference both numbers in the hotel PMS.

PNR Messaging
SI and OSI

SI Fields

SI Field History

As the GDSs developed, there were insufficient fields and processes to communicate the wide rage of room types, rate types and special requests specific to the hotel industry. In the early years, neither the GDSs nor many hotel companies could adequately process requests for suites, rooms with special views or even negotiated rates. The only way to communicate these types of issues was through the SI Field. This was the beginning of an overused and little understood field.

As the GDSs have enhanced their hotel systems, lodging companies have been able to include a wide range of room types, rate structures, negotiated rate structures and a multitude of optional fields. Now many GDSs allow the transmission of frequent guest numbers, extra bedding fields and corporate ID numbers, without the use of the SI Field.

Reasons to Use The SI Field

There are three reasons to use the SI Field:

1. To communicate special guest requests to the property.

2. To cover supplemental information not covered in the hotel company's database. For example, a request for non-smoking room type if the hotel has no non-smoking room type in their database.

3. To relay information about the client that may be useful to the property. For example, the client is President of XYZ Corporation, a valued client.

Character Limitation In The SI Field

SI Fields may be shortened or truncated if they exceed the maximum number of characters permitted. Each GDS has a character limitation on the SI Field. In some cases, the GDS may accept more characters in the SI Field than the various hotel computer systems can read. The hotel chain's policy pages and keywords can provide information on the character limitations for each hotel company. There are attempts being made by HEDNA to standardize the length of this field.

SI Field Misuses and Misconceptions

The following are problem areas in the use of the SI Field:

- The most common misuse of the SI Field occurs when an agent tries to circumvent system procedures. Some agents use the field to request a Negotiated rate instead of the process to shop and book the Negotiated rate, or for special requests for room types instead of booking them. Agents should search the hotel company's data in the hotel or chain description for the correct room types, rates or special booking instructions.

- There is a misconception that the confirmation number in a hotel segment also confirms the SI Field request -- only the room and rate booked are confirmed.

- Not all hotel companies process the SI Field in the same way:
  - There are some hotel companies who do not or cannot process the SI Field.
  - Some hotel companies pass this field directly to the property either by internal electronic methods or fax.
  - Some hotels do not review this information at the property until just prior to the arrival of the guest or at check-in.

  Information on how companies process the SI Field may be contained in the hotel chain's policy pages or keywords.

- Most SI Field requests do not require a response and none should be expected. If the SI Field contains a message for an "Upon Arrival" request, neither the property nor central reservation office will respond. The request cannot be responded to until the client checks in. An example is a request for an upgrade upon check-in -- no response will be sent. Other examples can include specific room, adjoining rooms, late checkouts or floor level requests.

- If an SI Field request asks for an airport transfer, agents must remember to advise the arrival flight number and time (Note: if an airline reservation is included in the same PNR, GDSs will pass this on to the CRSs).

Responses From The Property

In almost all cases, the response to the SI Field request must come from the individual property. Many hotel companies pass this information to the property in different ways and some may not have the functionality to forward the request automatically to an individual hotel. Many make note of the special request in their PMS but do not reply to the travel agent confirming the request.

Some hotel companies can generate automatic response to certain SI Field requests. There may be an auto generated response to the status of a request -- either confirming the request or stating it as "On Request". A good example of this is a request for specific bedding or a Smoking/Non Smoking room.

To respond to a SI Field request, the hotel property must contact their central reservations office, marketing automation department or third party service provider who have access to the GDS terminals required for responses. The hotel's answers can be electronic or manual. The GDS department at the CRO (or other location) must then update the PNR either by an OSI message or a queue message, if done electronically. Some hotel companies prefer to phone or fax the agent concerning SI Field requests needing responses. It is important to remember that individual hotel properties do not have access and cannot update GDS PNRs.

If the systems have been properly used, the hotel should answer a request that needs a response (such as airport transfers or early check-ins) in a reasonable amount of time. If an agent does not receive a response, they should check the hotel chain's policy pages or keywords for information regarding how the hotel company handles SI requests since not all hotel companies process the SI Field or respond to it.

Why Don't I Get A Response?

It is best to keep in mind that requests placed in the SI field are just that -- requests. Hotels will honor the requests if at all possible but the request is not confirmed unless a confirmation receipt specific to that request is returned from the hotel to the travel agent.

Modifications

SI Field messages may or may not be regenerated in the resell or modification, depending on the connectivity level of the chain.

OSI - Other Service Information

OSI Messages

An OSI message is a message between a hotel or hotel company and a travel agent. OSI messages are usually instructional or informational.

Hotel companies find it necessary to return OSI messages to travel agents for numerous reasons. Here are some examples:

- If a room is booked on a 6 p.m. hold when the hotel required a guarantee, some CROs may book the room and send an OSI message asking the travel

agent to forward the guarantee as soon as possible.

- If a travel agent books a Corporate Rate and a Corporate ID number is required but not given, the hotel company may book the Corporate Rate and send an OSI message asking the travel agent to forward the Corporate ID when available.

- To indicate alternate room requests (booked a Junior Suite on Request status but only have 1 bedroom suites available).

- To remind the travel agent that final payment is due on a prepaid package.

- To respond to SI Field requests.

- To explain a rejected segment. Records that appear with a UC or NO status are returned to the agency queue due to the segment status. Instructions on re-book procedures or details explaining the reject are usually returned in the OSI Field.

- To request missing information. On occasion, Type A communication links may be down and as a consequence missing fields and data are not edited by GDS check points. Missing information and/or missing field information may be requested from the agent by the hotel company in the OSI message. This could occur before the confirmation number can be returned.

OSI messages can be automatically returned to a PNR via Type A connections and many hotel companies automate OSI messages for their most common responses. Other hotel companies manually send their OSI messages to the PNR.

Commission Processing

Travel agents put problems with commission payments at the top of their lodging industry complaint lists. Late payment, insufficient payments or payments in foreign currency are all problems travel agencies face. (Agency commissions are a property-specific issue and are not influenced by how a hotel company processes voice or GDS reservations.)

With the growth of the GDS and the development of more sophisticated communication technology, efforts have been made to address travel agent commission problems through the introduction of centralized payment programs. Programs such as Pegasus Commission Processing as well as some representation companies, have developed programs that track the commission due to the travel agent and provide single monthly payments accompanied by detailed activity statements.

Travel agents benefit from these clearinghouses as they consolidate commissions from multiple hotels and are paid in the local currency of the agency. In this way, the agency avoids currency conversion charges when depositing the payment.

Understanding The Commission Payment Process

The travel agent can best understand how to effectively administer commission collection when they understand the process involved from the hotel property's perspective.

Step 1 The travel agent selects a hotel, based on the client's need and hotel availability, and books the accommodation through the GDS.

Step 2 The reservation is transmitted electronically to the hotel CRS. Depending on the interface between the CRS and the PMS, the reservation may be stored centrally or at the property level until a few days before arrival.

Step 3 When the guest arrives, the property asks the guest to verify contact and billing information in their guest record. If a guest cancels or does not arrive, the property makes a note in the guest record.

Step 4 Based on its reporting cycle and commission procedures, the hotel's accounting department reviews these guest activity records, calculates the commission payment due and issues a statement and check to the appropriate travel agency or a payment is processed through their consolidated payment company.

Step 5 Using a back office accounting system, the agency matches the actual guest information from the hotel system with the guest information from their GDS. The agency can identify whether there is a discrepancy or if there are any outstanding commissions due.

How Can Travel Agents Protect Their Commission Revenue?

If the agency has discovered a discrepancy or does not have a record of payment, they have the option of contacting the hotel directly or contacting the CRO (via queue, e-mail message or telephone call). The contact information and procedure for the particular lodging group should be in the chain policy information pages with the keyword "COMMISSION". Agencies should be prepared to provide a copy of the PNR to facilitate the research process.

If At First You Don't Succeed

Problem Solving and Assisting with Travel Agent "Challenges"

Reserving hotel rooms through the GDSs is the most cost efficient and convenient booking option available to travel agents. In this section, we explore some of the challenges travel agents may encounter and offer direction on how to overcome them.

Problems in booking hotel rooms electronically happen only rarely but when they do arise the travel agent with an understanding of the reservation process is better prepared to address them. This section will provide assistance on what to do when confronted with problems in booking hotels electronically.

How can a different rate from the one I booked show up in my PNR?

It is possible for a travel agent to see one rate or room type on their GDS availability display but when the booking is confirmed, a different rate or room type is returned from the hotel company. The new rate can either be returned directly to the PNR or the hotel company can send an OSI message to inform the travel agent of the changed rate. [Please refer to *PNR Message - OSI and SI* section for further information on OSI messages.]

This problem is very infrequent and usually the explanation is that there may have been a problem with rate updates or reservation processing. Just like airline fares, hotel companies may change room rates to optimize revenue and to compete with other hotels. When a hotel makes such a rate change, the change must be updated in the hotel PMS, the Central Reservation System (CRS) and the GDS. Generally, the CRS communicates the rate change to the GDS. Individual hotel properties cannot change rates directly in the GDS since only the CROs/CRSs have access to those computer systems.

Hotel companies attempt to address this issue in a number of ways. Some hotel companies have "automated rate updating," which permit them to update GDS computers within hours of new rates being entered in their CRS. Some hotel chains download their rate updates to the GDS companies several times a day, once a day or once a week via magnetic tape or file transfer. Other hotel chains have GDS computers at their Central Reservation Office and manually type rate changes directly into the GDS computer. Finally, seamless connectivity improves this situation since the rate information shown in the CRS is the rate information the travel agent sees on their GDS terminal.

What should the travel agent do?

GDS rates, CRS rates and property rates should match. If a higher rate is returned to the PNR than originally shown on an availability display, the agent should take a moment to queue a message or call the hotel companies GDS help desk (see "HELP" in chain policy information pages for information on these contacts). Hotel companies should honor the rate that is shown in the GDS and should update the rate as soon as possible to avoid further problems.

There is good news, too. Travel agents will usually be notified in the same way if a hotel has lowered their rate!

Why do rooms sometimes appear to be available but when I try to book them, they aren't available?

The explanation (described above) for rate discrepancies applies to availability differences as well. Some hotels change availability frequently. When a hotel opens or closes inventory the change is made in the property's PMS and communicated to the CRS. The CRS communicates the status change to the GDSs as soon as possible. Most hotel companies have fully automated availability updating. When the hotel changes room status, the GDSs receive the message (open, close, on request, min- or max- stay, etc.) within a few seconds. However, it is possible for a travel agent to book a room seconds after a status close message is sent to the GDS since transmission is not instantaneous. If the close has not been received by the GDS, the availability screen will still show availability. Line problems with communication links may occur and delay transmission of updates.

There may be times when availability is "out-of-synch" between the travel agent's GDS screen and the CRS. When this occurs, some hotel companies will send an automated reply that the dates are no longer available. Other hotel companies will send an automatic reply to the GDS screen showing alternate room types or alternate properties that are available to book.

What should the travel agent do?

GDS and hotel CRS availability should match but when they don't, the travel agent should queue a message or call the hotel company GDS help desk (see "HELP keyword in chain policy information pages for information on these contacts). Hotel companies will update availability to avoid future problems.

Why do I receive OSI messages confirming a different room type from the one I booked?

Room types or rate plans can sometimes show open on GDS availability screens but be closed in the hotel CRS. Sometimes just the one room type being requested is not available and alternate rooms are open at the hotel. When attempting to book a room type that is not available a confirmation number will not return to the PNR until the hotel company has time to find an alternate room for the travel agent client. For example, if the travel agent books an A1K that has just been closed in the hotel CRS (but not yet in the GDS), the hotel company will usually send either an automatic or manual OSI message saying that an alternate room type at the requested hotel has been confirmed.

What should the travel agent do?

If the alternate room type is unacceptable to the client, cancel the reservation in the GDS and book alternate accommodation. Call the hotel company GDS help desk if additional assistance is needed.

Why do hotel companies send UC ("Unable to Confirm") messages?

Hotel companies will never send a UC message unless there is absolutely no other way to confirm the requested room or rate or to offer an alternative. If dates or room types have become unavailable, the hotel company will call the hotel directly in an effort to accommodate the travel agent's original request prior to sending a UC message.

The most common reason for a UC message is that a date has suddenly become unavailable at the property. Hotels open and close rooms constantly, so that millions of status messages are received by the GDSs daily. Availability discrepancies are the most common cause of 'UC' responses.

What should the travel agent do?

Of course, the travel agent will need to book alternate accommodation for their client. However, excessive UCs are not acceptable. Agents should notify the hotel company of any persistent problems.

Why do I sometimes receive confirmation numbers within seconds and at other times it takes hours?

Hotel companies can have several different types of reservation processing links or connections to the GDS computers:

1. Manual
2. Type B (Teletype)
3. Type A
4. Type A – TCP/IP

Hotel companies with Type A connectivity return confirmation numbers to the travel agent computer within 7 seconds, more than 95% of the time. Type B connections average confirmation numbers returned within minutes. In rare cases, a Type B processing may be slower, with confirmation numbers returned in hours.

Remember either Type A or Type B messages may be delayed. If a confirmation fails to return within the seven seconds in a Type A situation, the booking may have been rejected due to some type of error. Errors can occur for many reasons:

- Invalid room types or rate categories
- Dates not being acceptable
- Incorrect booking format entries (e.g. not providing a required CD Number)
- The Type A communication link is down
- The hotel company, CRS, link is down via seamless communication link

The travel agent usually receives an error response on their screen specifying the problem so that the agent may correct the problem and proceed with the booking. However, some hotel companies simply reject the booking. It is the individual hotel company's discretion whether they send an electronic error message or reject the booking.

When a hotel automation department receives a rejected booking they need to book the room in their CRS and then return a confirmation number manually to the travel agent.

Reservation reject can also occur when there are line or link problems. However, it is in the hotel company's best interest to remedy any line problems as quickly as possible to avoid a backlog of hundreds of rejects.

What should the travel agent do?

Confirmation numbers should normally be received within a few seconds or, in Type B links, within hours. If a confirmation number is not received in 4-6 hours, queue a message or call the hotel company GDS help desk automation department for assistance (see "HELP" keyword in hotel policy information pages). Travel agents should understand that they must re-access their PNRs to see confirmation numbers in Type B situations.

Why is the rate I see in the GDS different from the rate I'm quoted when I call the hotel directly?

Hotel companies frequently change room rates to optimize revenue and to compete with other hotels. Usually, but not always, rate changes are immediately reflected in the GDSs. However, some hotel chains do not load all of their rate options into the GDSs because of system or staff restraints.

What should the travel agent do?

Trust the GDS. Most hotel companies load all their rates including their lowest in the GDS, and with seamless connectivity, most all rates are available.

Why do some hotel chains not offer all of their rate options in the GDSs?

In the past, the GDSs were limited in their functionality which made it difficult for hotel companies to load the full range of rates available. Hotel chains, travel agents and organizations such as HEDNA, worked with the GDS companies into expanding their rate options. With enhanced technology now available, most hotel companies are working very hard to make all of their rates and promotions available for travel agents to book.

What should the travel agent do?

To find out what rates a particular hotel chain offers in the GDS, call their automation department or review the Chain Policy section within the GDS . Policies on how to book rates not in the GDS (for example, Group rates) vary from hotel chain to hotel chain. Look at the Chain Policy pages within the GDS for explanations.

I need to obtain a guaranteed non-smoking room for my client, what do I do?

Non-smoking rooms in the GDS may be designated in the room description, or instructions on how to request or book them are included in the hotel description (HOD).

What should the travel agent do?

If a non-smoking room category is available, it should be booked. If not, some hotel companies accept requests for non-smoking rooms in the "SI Field". Look to the hotel Chain Policy page or HOD "RoomType" Keyword for more information.

I have a negotiated rate for my top client. How can I get it loaded into my GDS?

Negotiated rates are also referred to as multi-level rates, multi-tiered rates, contract rates or secured rates. Negotiated rate programs have become a primary feature of global distribution systems in the past several years. This is because the negotiated rate function allows hotels to list special rates in the GDSs that are viewable and bookable ONLY by an authorized travel agency for their accounts.

Large companies have negotiated room rates with individual hotels or hotel chains. In some cases, travel agencies or consortiums of travel agencies may also have their own contractual rates with hotels or hotel chains for all customers of the agency.

Once these negotiated rates have been established and loaded, only an agent that has been authorized and viewership defined can use their GDS terminal to search for hotels offering a negotiated rate for them or their clients, after entering the appropriate ID code or rate access code. The result will be a display of only those hotels that are available and offering the requested negotiated rate on the specified dates.

What can a travel agent do?

The travel agent should contact the hotel help desk and request that the negotiated rate be loaded (see "HELP" or "NEGOTIATED" keyword in chain policy information pages). Even though rates may be loaded properly by the hotel company if the agency has not completed the required steps to build the rate on their side, the rate may not be accessible. Agents should refer to the GDS software help desk if unsure of an agency's role in loading negotiated rates.

Why do some hotel chains send messages asking for a guarantee or deposit when other hotel chains do not?

Guarantee, deposit and cancel requirements vary from hotel company to hotel company and from property to property. Information on these policies should be listed within the property or chain description information or in the rate rules in the GDS.

When a guarantee is required, it usually means that various forms of guarantee will be accepted. When a deposit is required, it usually means that the hotel will only accept a cash deposit or a credit card billed prior to arrival to hold the room.

Guarantee, deposit and cancellation policies are the same whether the travel agent booking is made over the telephone or via the GDS.

What should the travel agent do?

Just like all the information in the GDS, deposit, guarantee and cancellation information is subject to change. Guarantee, deposit and cancel information can change frequently -- sometimes daily. To ensure that you always receive the most up-to-date policy information, some hotel chains automatically send OSI messages to inform you of the hotel's most current policies

If the agent determines that a credit card guarantee is required but their client does not have a credit card, the agent should look at the property or chain level policy information. Some hotel companies accept a check or money order. Other hotel chains have voucher programs where a guest can prepay a room and then mail a copy of the voucher to the hotel for a guarantee.

How can a hotel not have a record of my client's confirmation number?

GDS bookings usually go from the travel agent's terminal to the hotel company's Central Reservation System (CRS) and then on to the individual property within seconds. It is very unusual for anything to interfere with this electronic process, but if problems occur, the following reasons may explain why a reservation or cancellation may not have been delivered to the hotel:

- The reservation is not delivered to the hotel from their CRO until a few days prior to check-in. It may not yet have arrived at the hotel.
- Line or communication link problems caused the GDS booking not to be delivered to the hotel CRS.
- The reservation was rejected for manual handling and the hotel automation department did not correctly handle the booking.

- The hotel reservation staff may have misentered the reservation in some way.

- The hotel reservation staff did not re-enter the reservation or cancellation into the PMS.

- The hotel PMS uses a different numbering system from the GDS.

What should the travel agent do?

The hotel may have received the reservation even though the confirmation number does not locate it. Check with the hotel using other search criteria such as the client's name. Since a time delay may be involved, check again just prior to the client's arrival to confirm that the reservation has been received. If it has not, the travel agent should contact the hotel company GDS help desk.

Why are changes or cancellations to an existing reservation sometimes not received by the hotel?

The answer to the previous questions addresses some of the reasons why an adjustment or cancellation may not be delivered to the hotel or be processed correctly by the hotel company.

It may be helpful to know that hotel reservation systems have various ways to retrieve GDS bookings. Some hotel companies find the original reservation and return an automatic update to it, while others manually handle all changes to existing reservations. Some companies keep the same confirmation number when a reservation is changed or canceled while others issue separate change and cancellation numbers.

Most hotel reservations have cancellation policies. The timeframe for those policies listed in the GDS usually relates to the local time of the property.

What should the travel agent do?

While rare, when changes and cancellations are not handled correctly, the travel agent or guest may receive a no-show bill. If this happens, queue or call the hotel company GDS help desk. Be prepared to provide a copy of the PNR history, cancellation number and other supporting documentation.

Specific information concerning cancellation policies can be found in the rate rules, property information pages, or the chain policy/information pages.

Why would a hotel relocate a guest to another hotel even when the guest guaranteed the reservation?

This problem is rare and usually occurs when a hotel has "overbooked" their room inventory to ensure full occupancy. The hotel counts on some guests being "no-shows" to balance the overbooking. In addition, in-hotel guests may extend their stays without advance notice. This can cause a higher stayover in rooms that results in an overbooked situation. Many hotels alleviate the need to overbook by requiring deposits for reservations and setting strict cancellation policies.When an overbooking occurs, the hotel will arrange alternate accommodation for the guest at the same rate while offering additional features to thank the guest for their understanding. These special features might include transportation to the alternate hotel, suite upgrades or an in-room amenity. In some situations, hotels will pay for any incremental costs for alternate accommodations and the inconvenience caused by their error.

What should the travel agent do?

If the client was moved to another hotel and did not receive the same rate, the agent should contact the original hotel for assistance.

Why can a hotel receive a booking prior to ET (End Transaction)?

Hotel companies who have advanced Type A connections can book a room prior to the travel agent ending the reservation. This is a normal GDS process referred to as interactive reservation processing. Type A bookings have the ability to hold a room while you shop or confer with your client, while seamless connections permit the ability to view information drawn from the hotel system database. Some hotel companies hold a confirmation number prior to ET while others only assign a confirmation number at the end of the time of ET.

What should the travel agent do?

It is important to know that when you ignore reservations prior to ET a cancel message is generated to the hotel CRS. It is also important to know that the time frame varies for holding hotel rooms with each GDS prior to ET.

Travel agents should also remember to cancel any unwanted segments prior to ET rather than using the ignore function. The GDS will issue a cancellation number and the travel agent will have it as back-up in the event there is any dispute about the cancellation being received.

People keep telling me to cancel reservations via the GDS. Why is that so important?

Every time a travel agent makes a hotel booking, the hotel company is charged a net GDS booking fee. If the booking is canceled through the same system in which it was made, the GDS booking fee is therefore canceled. If a GDS booking is canceled by some other means, such as calling the hotel directly or by calling the CRO, the hotel company is still charged the GDS booking fee. In addition, if the reservation continues to be held in the GDS, your back office and commissions due reporting will be inaccurate.

What should the travel agent do?

It is good business practice to cancel a reservation in the same manner in which it is booked.

What happened to my commission?

There can be a number of explanations for why commission has not been credited to a travel agency. Some examples include:

- The property does not have a record of the booking and assumes the guest did not have a room reserved for them. A new reservation is made without the travel agency being recorded as the original source of booking.

- When a representation company or hotel consortia is involved in the transmission of the reservation, that company may be noted as the booking source and not the travel agent.

- When entering a guest record manually into the PMS, the property may spell the guest name differently from the travel agent record.

- The guest contacts the hotel directly to adjust or cancel the reservation without notifying the agent of the change.

What should the travel agent do?

Although agencies do not have direct control over solutions to these problems, hoteliers are attempting to tighten their reservation and reception procedures to minimize the number of problems. The agency should check the COMMISSION keyword in the chain information for instructions on how to proceed with their inquiries.

What else can I do to safeguard my commission revenue?

Many lodging companies only issue commission payments to travel agents who have included an ARC or IATA/IATAN number as part of the booking record. If the booking location is non-IATA sales intermediary who sells non-airline products (such as hotels, car hires, ferries, etc.), a TIDS (Travel Industry Designator Service) number will ensure a commission is paid.

What should the travel agent do?

To obtain a TIDS number for European and Asian agencies, contact IATA at the following address: Agency Accreditation Division The IATA Center P.O. Box 672, Route de L'Aeroport 33 CH-1215 Geneva 15 Airport Switzerland Tel: +41-22-799-2525 Fax: +41-22-799-2682 EMail: tids@iata.org http://www.iata.org/tids/ In addition, subscribing to centralized commission payment programs ensure that commission is received in the agency's local currency and offers the advantage of detailed tracking reports as well.

Why should I book hotels in my GDS?

Booking via GDS increases profitability of each hotel reservation by reducing communication and staffing costs. In addition, GDS bookings reduce administrative costs because they provide a clear audit trail.

HEDNA Electronic Distribution Glossary

A2A	*A term used in e-commerce. Short for "anyone to anyone".*
Abacus	*A global distribution system based in Singapore that serves 20 countries in Asia-Pacific. Jointly owned by Asian airlines and Sabre®. Represented by national marketing companies (NMCs) in each country, who are responsible for sales and support. Hotels are booked using the Sabre® Hotels system. To learn more about ABACUS visit http://www.abacus.com.sg*
Access Number	*The telephone number dialed by a modem that allows the user access to the Internet.*
AccessPLUS	*Worldspan Type A interactive message exchange that returns a confirmation before the end of transaction. After "end transaction", availability and rates are pulled from the Worldspan database as updated by the hotel associate.*
ADS	*Alternate Distribution System. Includes the Internet and other non-GDS channels of hotel distribution. HEDNA prefers the term "IDS" (Internet Distribution System).*
AH&MA	*American Hotel & Motel Association. A federation of state and city lodging associations through the United States.*
AIS	*Amadeus term for DRS. See DRS for complete definition.*
Alternate Availability	*GDS method of displaying other properties available within the same chain and city when request property is unavailable.*
Amadeus	*A global distribution system based in Europe. Amadeus is a public company. Represented in individual countries by a national marketing company or NMC, this is responsible for local sales and support. Hotels are booked using the "Amadeus Hotels" reservation function. Amadeus US is the Amadeus National Marketing Company responsible for marketing and support of the Amadeus GDS product in the United States, Canada, Mexico, Central America and Micronesia.*
America OnLine (AOL)	*A subscription or membership type information service accessed by the public using a computer and modem. Like other online computer services America OnLine offers access to news, e-mail, the Internet, and a diverse range of databases including some GDSs for booking of travel reservations.*

Apollo® system	*Originally developed as the internal central reservation system for United Airlines, Apollo is now a global distribution system operated by Galileo International, from their offices in Rosemont, Illinois. It is marketed in 106 countries including Europe, South America, Asia and Africa under the Galileo name and in the United States, Canada, Mexico, Caribbean and Japan as Apollo. Represented in individual countries by a national distribution company or NDC that is responsible for local sales and support. Hotels are booked using the "RoomMaster" reservation function.*
A.R.C.	*Airline Reporting Corporation - See IATA.*
ARInc	*Aeronautical Radio, Inc. - An independent, not-for-profit communications company owned by U.S. airlines, which operates the communication system linking U.S. airlines (ADNS - ARInc Data Network Services). Additionally, ARINC provides communication network services to link GDSs to travel service vendors such as hotel and auto rental companies*
ARPANet	*Advanced Research Projects Agency Network. The forerunner of the Internet. Established and maintained by the U.S. Department of Defense, it linked research facilities and universities.*
ASCII	*American Standard Code for Information Exchange. Although now widely used to denote plain text (text without formatting and independent of any type font), ASCII is actually a data code used in some communication applications to represent 128 possible character combinations. ASCII is also sometimes known as TTY, denoting its legacy in the teletype industry.*
ASP	*Application Service Provider. The technology architecture in which an individual uses an Internet browser on their PC (such as Netscape's Navigator) to access and use system functions. No system software is installed on the user's PC.*
ASPAC	*Acronym for Asia/Pacific, including Australia and New Zealand.*
Average Daily Rate (ADR)	*Figure derived by dividing actual daily revenue by the total number of rooms sold. Also see RevPAR.*
AVI	*A video compression standard developed for use with Microsoft Windows that combines video and audio. Video clips on the World Wide Web are usually available in both AVI and QuickTime formats.*
Axess	*A global distribution system based in Japan and owned by Japan Airlines and Sabre Inc. to serve primarily Japanese travel agents and Japan Airlines ticket offices. Hotel reservations are booked using the Sabre Hotels system. For additional information about AXESS visit http:/www.axess.co.jp*

B2B	*A term used in e-commerce. Describes business to business transactions.*
B2C	*A term used in e-commerce. Describes business to consumer transactions.*
Bandwidth	*A measurement of the speed of a communication circuit. The term is generally used to describe the amount of information that may be communicated from a server to a client computer. The greater the bandwidth, the faster the data transfer capability. The faster the modem, the faster the bandwidth.*
Banners	*A form of advertising on the Web. They are narrow strips displayed on Web pages that may be clicked for more information concerning a product or service.*
Baud	*A unit used to describe the speed of modems. While not accurate, the baud rate has come to mean the rate at which information is transmitted through the modem.*
Bed Night	*A measurement of occupancy. One room occupied for one night.*
Bits Per Second (BPS)	*The amount of data that can be transmitted over a communications medium.*
Booking Engine	*The behind-the-scenes system that provides reservations functionality on an Internet site. This functionality may be provided by a GDS or other reservation software provider such as a switch company. Some GDS examples include: Sabre is the booking engine for Travelocity.com; Worldspan is the booking engine for Priceline.com; Amadeus is the booking engine for 1Travel.com; and Galileo is the booking engine for Trip.com™.*
Bot	*Short for "robot". A term most frequently used for a program that automatically searches for sites or products on the Web, as in "shopping bot".*
Brochure	*A printed folder describing a hotel, a tour or a package*
Browser	*A computer program such as Netscape's Navigator or Microsoft's Internet Explorer that displays Internet content using HTML instructions.*
Bulk Data Transfer	*Function offered by several GDSs in which rate and other data updates are accumulated and then periodically transferred electronically from a hotel CRS to a GDS for incorporation in the GDS database. Generally, bulk data transfers take place on a daily basis.*
C2B	*A term used in e-commerce. Describes a consumer to business transaction such as those conducted on priceline.com or mercata.com.*

C2C	*A term used in e-commerce. Describes a consumer to consumer transaction such as those conducted on the auction site e-Bay.*
Chain Code	*The two letter code used in the GDSs to identify hotel chains. HEDNA administers the list of available chain codes.*
Cathode Ray Tube (CRT)	*See computerized reservation terminal.*
CBT	*Computer based training. Individual hands-on training where the user is generally self-paced and is not assisted by an instructor.*
Central Reservation Office (CRO)	*Operated by hotel companies to process toll-free telephone reservations and electronic reservations as well as to perform other marketing functions.*
Closed to Arrival (CTA)	*A room inventory control function. Indicates that a reservation for arrival on this date can not be confirmed.*
.com	*A domain name suffix denoting commercial entities such as corporations.*
Commission	*The payment which a travel agent receives from a supplier for selling transportation, accommodations, or other services.*
Complete Access Plus	*Amadeus' seamless connectivity product which enables travel agents to view rates and other property information drawn directly from hotel central reservation systems*
CompuServe	*A membership or subscriber type information service accessed by subscribers using a computer and modem. Like other online computer services, CompuServe offers access to news, e-mail, the Internet, and a diverse range of databases including some GDSs for booking of travel reservations. CompuServe is a division of AOL.*
Central Reservation System (CRS)	*Core system used by hotel-, airline-, car rental- and other suppliers to centrally manage reservations from various sales channels. Examples include Hyatt's Spirit system, Marriott's Marsha system.*
Computerized Reservation Terminal (CRT)	*A computer display terminal. CRTs are also referred to as video display units (VDU), video display terminals (VDT) or monitors.*
Confirmation Number	*An alphabetic, numeric, or alphanumeric code used to identify and document the reservation of air transportation, hotel or car reservations.*
Connectivity	*The data communication process linking global distribution systems to hotel company central reservation systems. The most common mode is seamless connectivity.*

Consortia Rate	*A rate negotiated between a hotel company and a travel agency group. Viewership of these rates in the GDS by a travel agent or other GDS user is restricted and the rate may be booked only after entry of either the agent's or client's access code.*
Cookie	*The information stored on a personal computer that helps identify the user when accessing a particular web site again. Cookies can contain information such as logins or other registration information as well as user preferences.*
CRM	*Customer Relationship Management. The name given to increasingly sophisticated programs to maintain close, lasting relationships between a company and its customers, between a hotel and its guests.*
CRO	*See Central Reservation Office.*
CRS	*Originally, the term used for a Global Distribution System. Now used in the hotel industry to refer to a hotel company's central*
CRT	*See Computerized Reservation Terminal.*
Cyberspace	*The whole universe of information available through computer networks such as the Internet, Intranets and extranets.*
Data Encryption	*The process that transforms information into random streams of coded information to provide security to the user.*
Deposit	*A specified amount or percentage of the total bill due to a hotel on a specified date prior to arrival or a certain number of days prior to arrival.*
Direct Connect Availability	*Sabre's seamless connectivity product that enables users to view rates, availability and other property information drawn directly from hotel central reservation systems.*
Direct Connect Auxiliary	*Sabre Type A reservation that enables users to receive interactive responses to bookings.*
Direct Connect Sell	*Sabre Type A reservation link that enables users to receive instant responses to bookings, modifications and cancellations. Utilizes EDIFACT messaging.*
Direct Reference System	*See DRS.*
DISA	*Data Interchange Standards Association. DISA is a nonprofit organization that coordinates development of e-business standards and electronic data interchange (EDI) formats.*

Distressed Inventory	*Hotel rooms normally discounted at the last minute to ensure that the property will fill to capacity.*
Domain Name	*The unique identifier/address of an Internet site. Example: www.hedna.org. Also called a URL.*
Download	*The process by which information stored on another computer is transferred to the user's computer.*
Double	*Hotel room with a double bed that may be occupied by one or two people.*
DRS	*Direct Reference System - The section of each global distribution system containing extensive text files. These files provide descriptive, sales-oriented descriptions of services to persuade the traveler/travel agent to book the product or service. DRS is the name for this function in Sabre and it is also the term most widely used to name this function. In Galileo/Apollo it is called HOD (Key Words), in Amadeus AIS and in Worldspan GRS. Hotels use it to describe chain level policies, procedures and programs (as compared to single property specific information that is contained in the Hotel Description or HOD).*
E-mail	*Electronic mail. Messages sent from one person to another via computer networks.*
EMEA	*An acronym for Europe, the Middle East and Africa.*
Euro	*European common currency for participating nations.*
Extranet	*The secured connection of two or more Intranets, generally between companies.*
Familiarization Tour (Fam)	*A free or reduced-rate travel program for travel agents and/or airline employees that is designed to acquaint them with specific hotels or destinations to stimulate their sale.*
FAQ	*Frequently Asked Questions. Used on the Internet for a listing of most commonly asked questions about a site and the appropriate answers.*
Firewall	*Software or hardware that limits access to a computer.*
Flame	*An online insult usually delivered by way of e-mail or a newsgroup posting.*
FTP	*File Transfer Protocol. A common means of moving files from one computer to another.*

Galileo® system	*Global distribution system operated by US-based Galileo International™. Marketed worldwide under the name Galileo except in the US, Canada, Mexico and Japan, where it is named Apollo. Hotels are booked using the "RoomMaster"™ reservation function.*
Galileo International	*A global technology leader whos core business is providing electronic global distribution services for the travel industry through its computerized reservation systems, leading-edge products and innovative Internet-based solutions. Galileo is a value-added distributor of travel inventory dedicated to supporting its travel agency and corporate customers and through them, expanding traveler choice. A subsidiary of Cendant Corporation, Galileo is headquartered in Parsippany, New Jersey, U.S.A., and has offices worldwide.*
GDS	*See Global Distribution System.*
General Sales Agent (GSA)	*A person or company contracted by a hotel chain to promote that chain in a city or country where the hotel chain does not have offices. In some cases, general sales agents accept hotel reservations.*
Geocoding	*The process of indexing locations using degrees of longitude and latitude.*
GETS	*Gabriel Extended Travel Services. GDS for over 30 SITA partner airlines. Hotels are booked using the SAHARA reservation function.*
Global Distribution System	*Also known as GDS. These are computerized reservation networks through which users - travel agents, airline employees or travelers - view data on a wide range of travel services, including air, hotel, auto rental and like services. Several GDSs provide their services to users worldwide (e.g. Amadeus, Galileo International, Sabre, Worldspan) while others provide regional or national coverage. Online services and the Internet are increasingly coming to be regarded as global distribution systems as well.*
Global Reference System (GRS)	*Another term for DRS. See DRS.*
GNR	*See Guest Name Record.*
.gov	*A domain name suffix denoting a U.S. government entity.*
Graphical User Interface (GUI)	*A user screen that merges pictures and words. It uses windows, icons, pull-down menus and a mouse may be used for navigation.*
GRS	*Global Reference System; another term for DRS.*
Guest Name Record	*GNR. The file in a hotel's central reservation system, or a single hotel's property management system, which contains the details of an individual reservation.*

GUI	*Graphical User Interface. A Windows-based, point-and-click, user friendly system of computer display. Examples of front-end booking systems that use GUI technology are Sabre BTS, SabreeVoya, Galileo ViewPoint, Worldspan Trip Manager, and AXI.*
Hacker	*A person who breaks into a computer network and who may tamper with that system.*
HCC	*Hotel Clearing Corporation. See Pegasus Commission Processing.*
HEDNA	*See Hotel Electronic Distribution Network Association.*
Hit	*A measurement of Internet viewership.*
HITIS	*Hotel Industry Technology Integration Standards. An organization working to establish standards for the transmission of data among computer systems used in the hospitality industry. Originally launch in late 1996 because of the efforts of the American Hotel & Motel Association.*
HOD	*Hotel Description in Galileo/Apollo and Sabre. The information area that contains information about a specific hotel or hotel chain, such as address, phone number, index/reference points, number of rooms, services and facilities.*
HOF	*Hotel Description in SAHARA. The information area that contains information about the hotel, such as address, phone number, index/reference points, and number of rooms, services and facilities.*
Home Page	*The central or opening screen on a Web site.*
Hotel Description	*See HOD.*
Hotel Detail	*Worldspan terminology for hotel description (HOD). The information area that contains information about the hotel, such as address, phone number, index/reference points, and number of rooms, services and facilities.*
Hotel Electronic Distribution Network Association (HEDNA)	*The organization of hotel marketing automation staff formed in 1991 to advance communication, procedures and technology for the sale of hotel accommodation through electronic distribution systems.*
Hotel Feature	*Hotel Description in Amadeus. The information area that contains information about the hotel, such as address, phone number, index/reference points, and number of rooms, services and facilities.*
Hotel ID	*The code assigned to each property by each GDS.*

Hotel Package	*A package offered by a hotel, sometimes consisting of no more than a room and breakfast, and other times, especially at resort hotels, of transportation, room, meals, sports facilities and various other components.*
Hotel Select	*Hotel program of Worldspan.*
Hotel SOURCE	*Worldspan's seamless connectivity product that enables travel agents to view rates and other property information drawn directly from hotel central reservation systems.*
HTML	*HyperText Markup Language. The programming system that enables files to be read by Internet browser software.*
http	*Hypertext Transport Protocol.*
Hyperlink	*A link from one location in a file to another or from one Web site to another.*
I.A.T.A.	*International Air Transport Association. Geneva-based association of airline companies. IATA accredits would-be travel agents throughout the world (except in the US, where ARC/Airlines Reporting Corporation gives accreditation). This certification includes issue of an ID-code, termed an IATA number. IATA numbers are used as the travel agent identifier in reservations to allow suppliers, including hotels, to pay commissions.*
IATAN card	*Photo identification issued by IATAN that is accepted as the only identification of accredited travel agents.*
IDS	*Internet-distribution system. Includes the Internet, the World Wide Web, Intranets, Extranets, and on-line services.*
Infini	*Japan-based regional GDS owned by Abacus and All Nippon Airways (ANA). Hotels are booked using the Sabre® Hotels system. More company information about INFINI is available at http://www.infini-trvl.co.jp*
Inside Availability®	*Apollo/Galileo's seamless connectivity product that enables travel agents to view rates and other property information drawn directly from hotel central reservation systems.*
Inside Link®	*Galileo International Type A link product that enables travel agents to receive instant responses to bookings.*
Integrated Hotel SOURCE Rate Range –	*A feature of Worldspan's next-generation seamless product. Users who are requesting a list of general hotel availability (Hotel List) are able to also request rate ranges (accessed with RR) from the list of seamless availability hotels during this first step of the shopping/booking process. The rate ranges are returned directly from participating hotel associate's systems (CRS) and integrated into the Worldspan display on a real-time basis.*

Integrated Hotel SOURCE Availability	*A feature of Worldspan's next-generation seamless product. Users who are requesting a list of general hotel availability (Hotel List) are given a list of seamless availability hotel status codes (hotel available or closed) during the first step of the shopping/booking process. The status is returned directly from participating hotel associate's systems (CRS) and integrated into the Worldspan display on a real-time basis.*
Internet	*A worldwide network of thousands of computer networks operated by universities, governments and businesses. The Internet allows transmission of electronic mail, remote operation of computers, transfer of documents (through FTP sites), conversations as in newsgroups or "chats" and - on the World Wide Web (WWW) - the display of graphics - including commercial messages. Many hotel companies have established sites on the World Wide Web.*
Internet Explorer	*Microsoft's Web browser software.*
Intranet	*A private network that uses Internet technology to facilitate communication or information exchange within corporations or organizations. Access to an Intranet is restricted to authorized individuals in the organization and is not publicly accessible.*
Inventory	*The term used to describe the supply of guest rooms at a hotel and their status - available/sold; open/closed.*
IP Address	*Internet Protocol address. Every computer on the Internet has a unique numeric address (for example, 204.146.46.8).*
IP Telephony	*An alternative form of telephone communication in which the local carrier uses the Internet rather than a long distance carrier communication network.*
ISDN	*Integrated Services Digital Network. A communication technology that moves data faster than ordinary telephone lines. It can move data at speeds up to 128,000 bits per second.*
ISP	*Internet Service Provider. The communication company that provides a telephone link by which users may access the Internet.*
Itinerary	*The travel schedule provided by a travel agent that details hotel names, flight numbers, departure times, etc. — as well as describing planned activities.*
Java	*A programming language similar to C++ with a number of features that make the language well-suited for use on the World Wide Web.*
Junior Suite	*A large hotel room with a partition separating the bed and sitting areas.*

King Room	*A hotel room with a king-size bed.*
LAN	*Local area network. A computer network that is located in a concentrate area such as a building.*
Last Room Availability	*An agent's ability to book the last available room in a hotel.*
Link	*A hyperlink that moves a user from one Web site to another or from one page or location within a site to another on that site.*
Login	*An ID or name used to access a computer system.*
Maximum Length of Stay	*A room inventory control function. Indicates that a reservation for arrival on this date may not extend past a certain number of days.*
Metabrowser	*Metabrowsers permit their users to search for products and services they have specified on one site rather than having to move between different web sites. Examples include CallTheShots.com, Quickbrowse.com and yodlee.com.*
Minimum Length of Stay	*A room inventory control function. Indicates that a reservation for arrival on this date must be for a minimum number of nights (two or more).*
Modem	*Short for modulator-demodulator. A device that converts signals from digital format to analog format for transmission over telephone networks.*
Multilevel Rates	*Apollo®/Galileo® (RoomMaster®) term for negotiated rates.*
Negotiated Rate	*A term used in global distribution systems to describe rates negotiated by a hotel company with a specific client. Viewership of these rates in the GDS by a travel agent or other GDS user is restricted, and the rate may be booked only after entry of either the agent's or client's authorization code.*
Netscape Navigator	*Web browser software.*
Network	*A system composed of hardware and software that allows two or more computers to be connected.*
NPC	*National Processing Company. Financial transaction, commission processing and payment program for travel vendors. Products include Commission Express, PortNPC and VirtualPay.*
Office ID	*The 9 character qualifier in Amadeus which serves as that GDS's pseudo-city code.*

One-way Interface	*Software programs installed in a hotel chain's CRS and a hotel's property management system which allows centrally booked reservations (i.e. GDS or CRO bookings) to be electronically delivered from the CRS to the PMS, where they are automatically entered into the PMS reservation file. This eliminates the need to type reservation data into the PMS and the delays often associated with that manual entry process.*
Open Travel Alliance (OTA)	*The Open Travel Alliance is a non-profit organization working to establish a common electronic vocabulary for use in the exchange of travel information.*
.org	*A domain name suffix denoting an organization. Usually indicates a not-for-profit, non-governmental agency.*
Overbooking	*Practice by a supplier of confirming reservations beyond capacity, either in expectation of cancellations or no-shows, or in error.*
Passive Segment	*Bookings made by travel agents for purposes of itinerary printing and invoicing when an agent has called the hotel supplier to make the booking. Passive segments do not send or receive messages to/from the supplier. Sometimes called a memo segment or a ghost segment.*
PDA	*See Personal Digital Assistant.*
Pegasus Commission Processing	*A Pegasus Solutions, Inc. division that provides centralized commission payment to travel agents worldwide, in local currency.*
Pegasus Electronic Distribution	*Formerly known as THISCO, a not-for-profit organization founded in 1989 by 16 hotel companies. Now a division of Pegasus Systems Inc. THISCO first developed UltraSwitch, a communication link between hotel central reservation systems and global distribution systems. Subsequently developed the UltraSelect — seamless connectivity function.* *Also includes Pegasus private-label reservation service (formerly NetBooker). A division of Pegasus Solutions, Inc.*
Pegasus Solutions, Inc.	*A Dallas, Texas-based organization supplying hotel distribution and representation services. Operates Pegasus Electronic Distribution (formerly THISCO), TravelWeb, Pegasus Commission Processing (formerly HCC), Pegasus Business Intelligence, Utell and RezSolutions.*
Personal Digital Assistant	*A small, frequently pocked-sized, personal computer, usually with a scheduler and a modem to provide wireless capabilities including connections to the Internet.*
PMS	*See Property Management System.*

PNR	*Passenger Name Record. The GDS file or record that contains information about a passenger's travel plans, including flight itinerary, hotel bookings, car rental booking segments, and related details.*
Priceline.com	*An Internet site that allows buyers to "name their own price" for a variety of products including airline tickets, hotel rooms, cars, groceries, gasoline, and others.*
Property Management System (PMS)	*The computer system in a hotel which contains information about available and occupied guestrooms, future reservations and guest charges.*
Pseudo-City Code	*Identifier that distinguishes one travel agency location from another. Generally, a three to five character code (alpha, numeric, or combination), depending upon the GDS. Pseudo-city codes are necessary when adding negotiated rates, as these rates can be "defined" or secured to an agency by using their pseudo-city code.*
Queen Room	*Hotel room with a queen size bed.*
QuickTime	*A video compression standard developed by Apple.*
Rack Rate	*The regular, public rate for a hotel room.*
Rate of Exchange Source	*The source used to determine the rate of exchange for currency conversions in computerized reservation systems.*
Representation Company	*An organization that provides reservation services, including processing of voice reservation requests and/or GDS connectivity for hotels or small hotel companies that prefer not to operate these services and systems themselves.*
ResAccess	*See WizCom International.*
Reservationist	*An employee who accepts, verifies and confirms reservations (often by telephone), frequently using a computerized reservation system.*
Revenue Management	*Also referred to as Yield Management. The practice of airlines, hotels and car rental companies of controlling the supply and price of their inventory to achieve maximum revenue or profit.*
Revenue per Available Room (RevPAR)	*The daily revenue divided by the total number of available rooms.*
RFP	*Request for Proposal.*
Room Code	*A series of alphanumeric characters used in a GDS to identify a particular room type in a hotel. (For example, an A1K is commonly defined as a deluxe room with 1 king bed).*

Room Master®	*Hotel program of Apollo®/Galileo®.*
Room Night	*One hotel room occupied for one night.*
Room Type	*General room description by classification (superior, standard, etc.) and bedding (single, king, queen, double)). Often associated with a rate code.*
Run of the House (ROH) Rate	*A flat price at which a hotel agrees to offer any of its rooms regardless of room type. Guests are assigned to rooms at the hotel on an availability basis.*
Sabre	*A global provider of travel marketing and distribution along with outsourcing and software solutions for the travel and transportation industries. This GDS is a publicly held company headquartered in Dallas-Fort Worth, Texas. Hotels are booked using the Sabre® Hotels system. More company information about Sabre is available on the world wide web at http://www.sabre.com*
Sabre Pacific	*A regional GDS owned by Abacus and Sabre. Serves users in the South Pacific, including Australia, New Zealand, Fiji and the Cook Islands. Hotels are booked using the Sabre® Hotels system. More company information about Sabre Pacific is available at http://www.sabrepacific.com.au*
SAHARA	*SITA Airline Hotel Advanced Reservations Automation. Hotel booking package for the Gets GDS. Allows staff of 256 airlines in 154 countries to check availability and obtain detailed hotel rates, status and facilities information of hotels.*
Screen Scraping	*An Internet terms that refers to the practice of using HyperText Markup Language to pull information off one Web site and deposit it onto another site. This may be done without the permission of the original site and may violate copyright laws.*
SeamlessAccess	*See WizCom International.*
Seamless Connectivity	*The global distribution system-hotel CRS connectivity links that allows travel agents and other GDS users to view rate, descriptive and availability data housed in the hotel company's central reservation system.*
Search Engines	*Internet site whose programs allow the user to key in words that assist in locating information on the Internet. Examples include Yahoo, Altavista, and Snap.*
SecuRate	*Negotiated rate program in Worldspan. Security is controlled by an internal table ensuring only qualified agencies are viewing and selling the rate. SecuRates are contractual and are negotiated between the agency and the hotel supplier.*

Sell through	*A hotel CRS room inventory control function. Indicates that arrivals or short multiple night reservations can not be confirmed for this date, but reservations with arrival on a previous date and a long length of stay can be confirmed.*
Server	*A computer system that manages and delivers information to users. One server can have several different software programs running on it. Recently has come to mean the computer that hosts Web pages.*
Session Control	*A function in some GDSs in which rooms are removed from inventory while a booking is being made. If the reservation is not completed within a time limit, the room is automatically returned to available inventory.*
SI Field	*Special Information field in a PNR or reservation that travel agents use to communication special requests.*
SID	*Subscriber/Station Identification Code or Subscriber ID. Used to identify a specific travel agency. See Pseudo City Code.*
Single	*Any reservation, facility or service to be used by one person.*
Single Image Inventory	*Shared use of a single file of room availability information by a chain's CRS and the PMSs installed in that chain's hotels.*
SITA	*Societe International De Telecommunications Aeronautics - A non-profit communications company owned by international air transportation industry. Offers communication network between airlines and other service providers. It operates the SAHARA GDS.*
Southern Cross	*GDS marketed in the South Pacific; uses Apollo®/Galileo® (RoomMaster®) applications.*
Suite	*Hotel unit of at least two rooms, one a parlor; may include kitchen facilities.*
Switch Company	*An organization which provides communication connections, data communication and data reformatting services to link global distribution systems and hotel central reservation systems. The two principal switch companies are Pegasus Electronic Distribution and WizCom International.*
T1	*A phone line that can transfer data at 1.5 million bits per second. It is frequently used to connect LANs to the Internet.*
T3	*A phone line that can transfer data at 45 million bits per second.*
TCP/IP	*Transmission Control Protocol/Internet Protocol. These two communication protocols permit the routing of information through the Internet.*

The Hotel Industry Switch Company (THISCO)	*See Pegasus Electronic Distribution.*
Third Party Provider	*An organization which provides private label services - processing of voice reservation requests, GDS connectivity or data processing services for hotel companies which prefer not to operate these services and systems themselves.*
THISCO	*See Pegasus Electronic Distribution.*
TPF	*Transaction Processing Facility. An operating system for high volume transaction processing systems. Originally called ACP, Airline Control Package and jointly developed by IBM, American Airlines, Delta Airlines and United Airlines.*
Travelocity.com	*One of the most powerful one-stop travel sites on the Internet providing secure online reservations for airlines, hotels, car and vacation packages, plus access to a vast database of destination and other travel information. Sabre owns 70% of the company.*
TravelWeb	*A component of Pegasus Electronic Distribution. TravelWeb allows individual hotels and hotel companies to present their products and sales messages on the World Wide Web.*
TravelWiz	*A service offered by WizCom International to its switch customers. TravelWiz allows individual hotels and hotel companies to offer their customers booking capabilities on their chain or individual Web sites.*
Triple	*Hotel room suitable for occupancy by three persons.*
Twin Room	*Hotel room with two single beds.*
Two-way Interface	*Adds to the reservation delivery and entry function of a one-way interface (see One-way Interface) by automatically communicating room availability changes resulting from locally booked reservations in a hotel's property management system to the CRS.*
Type A	*Inter-active, automated communication link between a GDS and a hotel company, through which reservations are delivered to the supplier's central reservation system for review, and a confirmation returned to the travel agents, within seven seconds.*
Type B	*Batched-type (teletype) electronic communication process linking GDSs and suppliers, such as hotel companies, through which reservations are delivered to the supplier's central reservation system for review. A confirmation is returned to the travel agent's GDS queue, from which they are recovered and read by the agent.*
UC	*See Unable to Confirm.*

Unable to Confirm (UC)	*The code sent by a hotel company to a travel agent via a GDS when the hotel company is unable to confirm a reservation requested through that GDS.*
UltraSwitch	*See Pegasus Electronic Distribution.*
URL	*Uniform Resource Locator. The standardized address for accessing an Internet location.*
UNIX	*A computer operating system that is widely used for Internet servers.*
Video Display Terminal (VDT)	*See Computer Reservation Terminal.*
Video Display Unit (VDU)	*See Computer Reservation Terminal.*
Walk	*Hotel industry term for placing an arriving guest at a substitute hotel due to lack of available accommodation at the initially reserved property. Often the sold-out hotel will pay for the substitute room for the first evening as well as for taxi fare to the second property and one or two telephone calls to the guest's home or office.*
WAN	*Wide Area Network. A network of computers linked over a long distance, usually by satellites and telephone lines.*
WAP	*Wireless Application Protocol. The standard that enables display of Internet content on wireless electronic devices such as cellular telephones and personal digital assistants (PDAs).*
Web site	*A collection of Internet pages, usually consisting of a home page and several other linked subpages.*
Weekend Rates	*Special rates often used to attract leisure travelers to business hotels during weekends*
WizCom International Ltd.	*A wholly owned subsidiary of Cendant Corporation. WizCom is a provider of electronic reservation processing and information management systems. WizCom provides electronic distribution and e-commerce solutions for the Internet, GDS and other travel reservation systems. Established in 1987 to supply GDS and reservation services, WizCom developed the first seamless connectivity (Seamless Access) link. WizCom also markets a central reservation system for hotels.*
Worldspan	*The Atlanta, Georgia-based global distribution system formed by the merger of the PARS and DATAS II GDSs in February 1991. Principal owners are Delta Airlines, Northwest Airlines, and TWA. Hotels are booked using the "Hotel Select" reservation program.*

WorldRes	*WorldRes.com operates an online distribution network headquartered in San Mateo, California. WorldRes.com owns and operates two consumer Web sites (PlacesToStay.com and BedandBreakfast.com).*
Yield Management	*See Revenue Management.*
XML	*Extensible Markup Language. XML allows Web designers to create their own customized tags, enabling the definition, transmission, validation, and interpretation of data between applications and between organizations.*

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