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Guests' reservation behavior in two online distribution channels

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Guests' reservation behavior in two online distribution channels

by

Cristian Virgiliu Morosan

A dissertation submitted to the graduate faculty
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Major: Foodservice and Lodging Management

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2005

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CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

Today, use of the Internet in the travel industry is having tremendous impact on traditional ways of business between customers and travel-related companies. The travel industry is becoming one of the largest e-commerce businesses on the Internet, accounting for approximately one third of the total number of transactions (Toulantas, 2003). Thirty-five million Americans were reported to have purchased travel-related products and services on the Internet in 2003, with a 17 percent increase from 2002 (Moran, 2004). Perceived as a fast-growing business opportunity, the Internet has been adopted by many travel organizations as a new, competitive marketing tool in providing travelers not only with travel-related information but also with online transaction opportunities (Doolin, Burgess, & Cooper, 2002; Joines, Scherer, & Scheufele, 2003).

Replacing the role of traditional travel and reservation agents, online travel Web sites, in particular, hotel Web sites, are attempting to reposition themselves in Internet savvy customers’ minds. Rayman-Bachus and Molina (2001) stressed that the major repositioning strategies for online customers lie in unrestricted access to information, highly interactive and cost effective communications between customers and companies, and secure transaction protocols. The hotel industry’s continuous efforts to attract customers to the Web have been proven by its online statistics. The statistics indicated that year after year, more customers directly visited hotel-owned Web sites to make reservations, bypassing travel intermediary Web sites such as Expedia.com and Travelocity.com. The ratio of direct online to intermediary reservations had been shifted from 52-48 percent in 2002 to 53-47 percent in 2003, and is expected to reach 55-45 percent in 2005 (Price & Starkov, 2003).
The dynamic nature of Internet business requires rapid adaptation by the hotel companies to utilize their Web sites as major information distribution channels as well as online transaction mechanisms. Lanz and Shapiro (2003) purported that hotel management and Web site developers should pay more attention to customer-focused Web site features than company profit-driven Web sites by readdressing Web sites as "forever-evolving interactive brochures." Customer-focused Web sites should be equipped with rich information content about special offerings (e.g. "lowest price guaranteed" programs), efficient reservation tools, virtual tours of hotel rooms, interactive maps for driving directions, enhanced graphics, and high loading speed (Koumelis, 2004). All these enhancements have made great impact on the way in which hotel rooms are presented and sold today.

1.1 Impact of the Internet on the hotel distribution channels

The hotel industry is confronting a very complex channel of distribution for its products and services, especially in controlling room inventories due to proliferation of online intermediaries (Peterson & Merino, 2003). The complexity of the distribution channel is caused by the intermediaries' substantial involvement in controlling hotels' value chain. The most common business model adopted by the intermediaries is the merchant model. In this model, intermediaries can purchase room inventories at lower rate from multiple hotels and mark up to customers. This results in high profits for the intermediaries but potentially low profits for the hotels because the latter receive a low, prenegotiated rate (Bowers & Freitag, 2003). This generates conflicts between hotels and intermediaries within the distribution channels as both hotels and intermediaries struggle for higher profits. In addition,
hotels have difficulties controlling their own inventories and tend to diminish their brand and price integrity (Price & Starkov, 2003).

Even in this competitive and complex online distribution channel both intermediaries and hotels are in need of their counterparts to succeed. A substantial portion of online room reservations was made by the intermediary travel Web sites. According to the 2002 PhoCusWright report (Bowers & Freitag, 2003), the hotel industry generated $6.3 billion from online room reservations. The online travel Web sites generated approximately $3 billion of the $6.3 billion hotel room sales. Of these $3 billion, it was estimated that $2.3 billion came from merchant model Web sites (Bowers & Freitag, 2003). Major efforts made by hotels to attract customers to their Web sites included lowest guaranteed rates, direct connections with agencies and corporate clients, and industry partnerships (PriceWaterhouseCoopers, 2003).

All these online marketing strategies adopted by the hotel industry cause substantial modifications in the companies’ marketing mix, in particular, distribution (Webb, 2002). Traditionally, the major distribution players in the hotel industry were hotels, travel agents, and customers. Today, these participants have shifted toward a more dynamic system, consisting of hotels, traditional and online intermediaries, and customers. Hotels are becoming engaged in multi-channel distribution, attempting to sell products and services more effectively and efficiently using a combination of traditional and electronic distribution channels. A wide variety of distribution channels results in a various room rate structure. Selling rooms through online intermediaries often means deep discounting, which makes hotels encourage their customers to make reservations directly through the hotel Web sites. However, due to the their high advertising power, it was easy for intermediaries to increase
their hotel room sales fast, at lower rates than those of the hotel Web sites or traditional travel agents. Recently, a few hotel chains have tried to implement “lowest rate guaranteed” programs, meaning that hotel chains offer the lowest rate only on their Web site and try to match the rate of third parties’ if the rate is lower than that of hotels’.

The transformations in distribution, price, product, and promotion have impacted the traditional structure of the hotel value chain. The traditional distribution channels from hotel brand central reservation systems to consumers through different forms of intermediaries (e.g. switch companies, global distribution systems, travel agents) are inefficient and expensive because they involve too many levels to reach the customers. These channels have been modified and in many cases replaced by new e-distribution channels, starting from hotel brand central reservation system to consumers, through one or two online intermediaries (e.g. online business to consumer applications) (Hospitality eBusiness Strategies Inc., 2002). In this context, hotels must use cheaper and more flexible distribution channels, so called “direct Web distribution strategies”, in which the hotel’s Web site is the central element.

These radical transformations have induced changes in the power structure of hotels’ value chain, causing conflict among participants in the distribution channel. Despite hotels’ efforts to encourage travelers to make reservations on their own Web sites, intermediaries have became more powerful than hotel companies in terms of Internet readiness and advertising power. In 2003, online intermediaries such as Expedia.com, Travelocity.com and Hotels.com controlled over 43 percent of the Internet room sales (Starkov, 2003a; 2003b). As online intermediaries increase their market share, the conflicts between hotels and intermediaries are becoming severe. As one way to deter intermediaries’ power in the channel, five leading chain hotels (Marriott International Inc., Hilton Hotels Corporation,
Hyatt Hotels and Resorts, Intercontinental Hotels Group, and Starwood Hotels and Resorts) and the technology pioneer Pegasus, Inc., organized a Web consortium to provide the best room rate for customers across multiple channels (Carrol & Siguaw, 2003; Travelweb.com, 2004).

1.2 Online reservations trend

The dramatic transformations in e-distribution have made customers change the way they reserve hotel rooms. Since 2000, an increasing number of have travelers used the Internet as an information source and a place to make online transactions. In 2003, approximately 53 percent of the U.S. population used the Internet as a primary medium for travel arrangements by visiting specific Web sites of a company and/or a destination (Convention and Visitors Bureau of Greater Kansas City, 2004; PhoCusWright, 2003). PhoCusWright (2003) reported that two major travel portal sites, Expedia.com and Travelocity.com, were major hubs for information search for potential travel destinations. In addition, during past five years travelers were found to be more attached to the Internet in their online transactions than traditional reservation methods, and were doing one stop shopping by reserving three vertical travel deals (e.g. airline+hotel+car).

The migration of the travelers to the Internet has created a shift in the ratio of online to offline hotel reservations. In 2004, the ratio of online to offline travel was expected to be 27 to 73 percent. This represents significant growth in online travel: the ratio was only 7 to 93 percent in 2000 and rose to 17 to 83 percent in 2003. Out of a total of $200 billion in revenues in the travel industry, $49.5 billion is expected to be generated from online bookings. The total revenue from online reservations was expected to increase to $79 billion
in 2004. Despite the downturn of the economy, industry experts estimate that the online market will continue to grow as more customers are expected to make more travel arrangements online. Jupiter Research estimates that the online reservations will continue to grow each year at a rate of approximately 20 percent, and lodging revenues attributable to the Internet will reach $15.5 billion in 2006 (Price & Starkov, 2003).

Despite the growing online market, hotels still have not found an efficient way to persuade customers to reserve rooms directly on chain-owned Web sites. This is primarily due to the lack of reliable Internet strategies, ineffective online distribution, and the explosion of online intermediaries. Although the online market is expected to increase over the next few years, industry experts are skeptical with respect to the ratio of hotels versus intermediary Web sites. PhoCusWright indicated that new online customers will be lured by all-in-one-place comparison and deeply discounted rates that the intermediaries provide on their Web sites (Price & Starkov, 2003).

1.3 Purpose of the study

Hotels have been making great effort to encourage travelers to reserve rooms directly on their Web sites rather than to do on third-party intermediaries. This strategy is advantageous for hotels because using their own Web sites would prevent them from paying commissions to third-party Web sites, and would reduce the cost of distribution. In turn, the intermediaries have been positioned in a very competitive situation to encourage travelers to make room reservations through their portals by offering deeply discounted prices, opportunities to compare rates, and additional information about the property and destination.
In this context, it is very interesting to investigate why travelers make reservations online and what determines them to make reservations on hotel-owned versus intermediary Web sites.

Therefore, by adopting an extended technology acceptance model (TAM), this study aims to explore travelers’ room reservation behaviors on the Internet. Specifically, this study attempts to:

- Examine the effects of perceived usefulness, ease of use, and playfulness on attitudes toward using Web sites for their room reservations.
- Identify travelers’ different perceptions of usefulness, ease of use, and playfulness between two online reservation channels (hotel-owned Web sites and intermediary Web sites).
- Examine whether prior experience with online reservations impacts travelers’ perceptions of usefulness, ease of use, and playfulness to make reservations on the Internet, and their attitudes toward using Web sites for their room reservations and intentions to use them.
- Develop online reservation strategies to meet travelers’ changing needs in e-distribution channels.

1.4 Significance of the study

This study developed a conceptual framework for enhancing room reservation Web sites by identifying key determinants that affect travelers’ online reservation behavior via a hotel’s Web site as opposed to an intermediary Web site. Little empirical research has been conducted to assess major factors that affect travelers’ use of a hotel-owned Web site for their online reservations. Many industry practitioners have put great emphasis on direct
online reservation strategies for hotels in order to maintain hotels’ price integrity and prevent brand erosion caused by intermediaries’ control of hotel room inventories.

A clear understanding of online travelers’ needs on the Internet will provide the not only the hotel chains, but also the intermediaries with opportunities to develop customer-focused Web site strategies, increase revenues by increasing power within the value-chain, and ultimately improve customer satisfaction and retain more customers. The key is to know exactly what attributes have the greatest impact on the travelers’ decisions to make online reservations. Some attributes might have more weight for customers when making a reservation decision. Therefore, both hotels and intermediaries can improve their Web sites based on the important characteristics perceived by customers. By utilizing such customer-focused strategies, hotel chains and intermediaries can create very efficient Web sites, on which customers can find quickly and effortlessly all the information that they need to make their best reservation decision. Such customer-oriented Web strategies not only improve hotel revenues, but also increase customer satisfaction and retention.
CHAPTER 2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This chapter reviews the most relevant studies about traditional and electronic distributions and the role of the Internet in the distribution of hotel rooms. It starts with a few general considerations about the Internet as a major factor that affects the way hotel rooms are reserved and sold today. The next two sections concentrate on the main theories on traditional and electronic distributions with a focus on major findings of and critical issues about the distribution channels in both general business and the travel industry. And, finally as a theoretical keystone, the TAM has been comprehensively reviewed and adopted to develop a conceptual framework to examine travelers’ room reservation behavior in the Internet environment.

2.1 The Internet as a major driving force for innovations in the hotel industry

The popularity of the Internet and related information technology is a preferred topic in literature as both researchers and practitioners believed that the Internet would change the nature of individual businesses, markets, and the economy in a profound way (Biswas & Krishnan, 2004). In an early study about the influence of the Internet on the society, Weiner and Brown (1995) predicted potential societal changes such as demographic shifts, the need to save time, and proliferation of product information and their impact on the acceptance of the Internet as a new marketplace. In the subsequent years, when a large body of literature on the Internet emerged, special attention was paid to topics such as Web site characteristics and optimization (Burke, 1997; Jeong & Lambert, 2001; Jeong, Oh, & Gregoire, 2003; Morrison & Harrison, 1998), Web users’ socio-demographic profiles (Tierney, 2000; Weber & Roehl,
1999), current and potential problems related to use of Internet for travel arrangements (Chung & Law, 2003), and impact of the Internet on marketing (Biswas & Krishnan, 2004; Clemons, Hann, & Hitt, 2002; Kasavana, Knuston, & Polonowski, 1997).

The Internet was adopted rapidly as a new communication and marketing tool by many business organizations. Because the goal of each company is to create value, the Internet emerged as an efficient instrument for value creation. Value creation on the Internet can be achieved in three ways: by (1) engaging in one-to-one online marketing, (2) integrating cost-effective electronic transactions into the company’s core business, and (3) allowing companies to know their best customers and provide personalized service (Biswas & Krishnan, 2004). Among all online organizations, travel organizations account for the major part of Internet business ranked as the top product sold over the Internet (Moran, 2004). Online statistics show that the Internet usage is growing and that travelers are neglecting the traditional travel organizations such as brick-and-mortar travel agencies and proceed online for their travel arrangements (Price & Starkov, 2003).

The Internet has changed the way travel organizations function today, and most importantly, the way in which travelers look for information and make their travel arrangements online (Carroll & Siguaw, 2003). At the beginning of the Internet age, both travelers and travel organizations were skeptical about the new technology (Law & Leung, 2000) mostly due to the fear of insecure transactions. Later, realizing its importance, many hotels, travel agencies, and airlines invested tremendous amount of resources in creating their own Web sites, in an effort to encourage customers to visit the Web sites for their fundamental sources for information search and online transactions and build a strong relationship with their customers, which results in improving name recognition in the
electronic commerce environment. However, due to lack of Internet experience, many of these companies outsourced the construction of their Web sites. These companies ended up with Web sites containing a large amount of information regardless of its appropriateness. Today, organizations involved in Internet business have gained experience and managed to overcome most of the obstacles generated by little Internet knowledge. Additionally, the current advanced technology has accelerated Internet use as a major information source and marketspace for transactions by all travel organizations and travelers.

As a result of the mass adoption of the Internet by all participants of the hotel value chain, its structure has been transformed from a simple channel in which products and services circulated from producers to retailers, to multiple distribution channels, characterized by complex relationships and conflicts among participants. In an effort to diminish the power of intermediaries within the value chain, hotels and airlines, major sources of inventories in the travel industry, started to create their own Web sites in order to make consumers conduct all travel arrangements on these Web sites by bypassing electronic travel intermediaries (Carroll & Siguaw, 2003).

Travel organizations adopted the Internet as a new environment in order to increase their profits. In this context, the Internet plays two major roles: (1) an information provision tool, and (2) a promotion tool (Kasavana et al., 1997). Many studies have been conducted to assess how the Internet is used as a means of travel information dissemination (Decrop & Snelders, 2004; Gursoy & Umbreit, 2004; Huang, 2003; Kuo, Chu, Hsu, & Hsieh, 2003; Susskind, Bonn, & Dev, 2003; Weber & Roehl, 1999). However, most of these studies focus on online travel information search behavior and the optimization of the travel information search process.
One of the main reasons why all travel organizations adopted the Internet quickly was the low-cost dissemination of information (Carroll & Siguaw, 2003). For travel companies relying mostly on providing a large amount of information, Web sites emerged as 24/7 brochures, distributed to consumers at a lower cost than printed media (Price & Starkov, 2003). Another remarkable feature of the Internet is its interactive nature. Researchers (i.e., Wang, Yu, & Fesenmaier, 2002; Wang & Fesenmaier, 2004) indicated that available online communities affected the overall effectiveness of travel firms’ marketing efforts, so did interactive features of Web sites (Murphy, Olaru, Schegg, & Frey, 2003).

Of all components of the Internet, the Web has proven to be an effective means of advertising, marketing, and distributing travel products and services (Hoffman & Novak, 1996). Kim, Lee, & Hiemstra, (2004) and Hoffman and Novak (1996) focused on Web site optimization by addressing how to attract consumers, build customer loyalty, and repeat visitation/purchase. E-mail is believed to be an effective tool for marketing communications as well because it offers a more personalized interaction with guests and generates a new business by repositioning destinations in the minds of Internet-savvy travelers (Murphy et al., 2003; Travel Industry Association of America, 2004).

2.1.1 Online travelers and their behavior

Online travelers have different characteristics than off-line travelers with regards to their socio-demographic profiles. Convention and Visitors Bureau of Greater Kansas City (2004) reported major characteristics of online travelers based on their demographic profile. Online travelers are educated (at least college degree), have more income than average population (approximately $70,000 a year), and are fairly young (44 percent between 18 and
35 years of age). In comparison by gender, men tend to spend more money on their travel than do women ($2,482 versus $1,638). In addition, travelers seem to like booking last minute deals: one third of all e-travelers arranged their travel two weeks or less before the trip.

The Internet has proven to be a major travel information source and communication medium for travelers (Connolly, Olsen, & Moore, 1998). Because travelers are looking for an overall pleasant, customized experience with all travel-related activities and accommodations at an affordable rate, the Internet can easily transform all intangible information about products and services into digitized tangible and vivid pictures (Wilson & Abel, 2002). Features such as room virtual tours and a plethora of photos of destinations, all embedded in the rich content of the travel Web sites, help travel organizations make their products and services more tangible. Another important reason that travelers used the Internet lies in their increased control over the transaction process. Yesawich, Pepperdine, Brown, and Russell (2003) found that travelers stated that the most important change brought by the Internet was the ability to control the whole purchase process from the prepurchase stage of information search through final decision making and purchasing.

A large number of travel information sources available online can help travelers make more informed purchase decisions and increase their expectations of speed, quality, security, and enjoyment, which results in building strong confidence in the new transaction environment. In terms of travel purchases, in the early stages of Internet use, travelers would only search the Web for travel information, and rarely make a hotel or an airline reservation. The main use of travel Web sites was to gain information about a destination (McLemore & Mitchell, 2000). Despite the availability of fast and secure Internet connections, today, a
significant number of travelers still use low Internet connections that often break up in the middle of an information search process or transaction, resulting in frustration and disappointment. However, the majority of travelers adopted fast and secure Web technologies and, as a result, gained confidence in online business. Today, however, there are still many travelers who only look for travel information online and then purchase offline, using the traditional way of making reservations (Moran, 2004).

2.2 Overview of hotel distribution

2.2.1 Traditional distribution

Researchers (i.e. Hunt, Ray, & Wood, 1985; Svensson, 2001) view traditional distribution as a way to physically move products and services from producers to consumers through a chain of processes in which each participant in the distribution channel adds value to the final product or service. Although there have been numerous attempts to formulate theories and conceptual frameworks to explain how distribution works (Hunt, et al., 1985), these frameworks lack theoretical rigor and generalization power (Svensson, 2001). Instead of creating dynamic theories capturing the complexity of the marketplace, scholars (i.e. Hunt et al., 1985) focused on only describing static aspects of the process. These theories viewed distribution strictly from a firm’s perspective, in most cases overlooking the need to include the consumer in the theory or framework (Svensson, 2001).

Traditionally, a general marketing theory focused on examining the vertical relationships among the firms involved in a channel. Therefore, one of the most important topics in the literature is cooperation among channel members because it provides the basis for all relationships between buyers and sellers within a distribution channel (Svensson,
As Gill and Allerheiligen (1981) noted, a prime basis for channel organizations lies in the economic benefits resulting from specialization. Indeed, channel members are specialized in performing only certain tasks within the channel because it becomes increasingly difficult for one company to control all aspects of the distribution channel. However, specialization creates dependence among participants. Under these conditions, cooperation among participants is inherently necessary for achieving their individual, and sometimes mutual, goals (Svensson, 2001).

Researchers (i.e., McCalley, 1999; Stern and El-Ansary, 1988; Svensson, 2001) defined the distribution channel in a similar pattern: a product or service is sent from producer to consumer and sometimes it is transformed along the way; the distribution channel is everything that encompasses this journey of the product or service. The distribution channel is defined as "a set of independent organizations involved in the process of making a product or service available to the consumer or business user" (Stern & El-Ansary, 1988, p. xxvii). In general, the distribution channel is viewed as a collection of companies that add value to the service as it passes from provider to the consumer (Porter, 1985). Shifting from its focus on the company and its marketing program to the consumer and his/her expectations, the distribution channel has been defined as follows:

"The marketing channel is a business structure, reaching from the point of product origin to the consumer, through which a manufacturer or marketer motivates, communicates, sells, ships, stores, delivers, and services the customer's expectations and the product's needs."

(McCalley, 1999, p. 4)

The distribution (marketing) channel was regarded either as single entity (Anderson, 1965), a super-organization (Stern, El-Ansary, & Coughlan, 1996), or a complex social
system (Balderston, 1964, Wilkinson, 1996). This system consists of a number of firms whose ultimate goal is distributing products or services from producers to the ultimate consumers (Svensson, 2001). Although the importance of channel design is emphasized (Stern et al., 1996), there is no guarantee that the channel would function correctly unless proper channel management is in place. Managing the channel means to manage all the structures and functions of distribution channels.

The structure of distribution functions has two important components: (1) the physical distribution structure and (2) the companies’ marketing programs. Although the structure is fairly simple, complications may arise when companies attempt to select simple, effective, and easy-to-manage distribution structures and, at the same time, engage in strong marketing plans for competitive markets. Such complications may arise from misevaluating the capabilities of channel members to perform under tough competition (McCalley, 1999). Because such functions and relationships are complicated and hard to manage, the research community tried to separate these relationships into subcomponents such as channel structure, power, cooperation, conflict, and roles.

Channel structure refers to the best profitable way to deliver products and services to the consumer. To do this, companies must create organizational structures whose main purpose is to help companies accomplish their marketing plans (McCalley, 1999). Typically, the channel structure involves three types of organizations: (1) product or service source (the manufacturer or service provider), (2) the channel intermediaries (wholesalers, brokers, and agents), and (3) the consumers of products and services. Although many older theories focus on the upper sections of the channel structure (manufacturers and intermediaries), the newer studies focus on the impact of consumers on the channel structure. Although consumers are
at the bottom of the distribution channel and their impact on the channel may only seem insignificant, their impact on the channel’s structure is substantial. The degree to which manufacturers and service providers can satisfy the needs and wants of the consumers can affect the success or failure of the channel structure. Therefore, consumer marketing efforts are instituted to create actions in the channel that would ultimately help manufacturers and service providers accomplish their objectives (McCalley, 1999). Therefore, the design and implementation of each channel structure should start with an evaluation of consumers’ needs and wants, and proceed backwards to the manufacturer or service provider.

As discussed previously, in general marketing, distribution refers to physically moving goods from producers to the final consumers, but in the travel industry, distribution involves moving the consumer to the hotel, airline, restaurant, or cruise ship (Kotler, Bowen, & Makens, 1999). Distribution captured the attention of travel and hospitality academic research community as well. Bowen and Sparks (1998) noted two directions in the study of distribution: franchising (Dev & Brown, 1990; Hing, 1996; Parsa, 1996) and consortia (Roper, 1995).

Dev and Brown (1990) examined the extent to which the business activities of hotels were vertically structured and discovered that this structure was determined by the interaction between the firm’s vertical structure, its strategy, and the dynamics of the task environment. In a study about the restaurant industry, Hing (1996) found that, despite minor dissatisfactions with various aspects of financial costs and controls imposed by franchisors, most franchisees were willing to accept such limitations as a fair exchange for the benefits that they received. Parsa (1996) observed substantial levels of conflict resulting from imposing too much power to franchisees. In addition, when franchisors used power to impose
new concepts on franchisees, the franchisees did not necessarily achieve successful implementation of such concepts (Parsa, 1996). Findings of his study indicated that the franchisors’ choice of power sources can be critical for the long-term maintenance of franchisor-franchisee relationships.

Examining hotel consortia in the United States, Roper (1995) discovered that, in order to compete, hotel firms must achieve economies of scale. To gain stability, these firms must gain access to broad markets. At the time of the study, Roper considered that the global market conditions did not offer substantial competitive advantages to hotel consortia. Due to the dynamic nature of the process and the emergence of the Internet as a new distribution environment, Bowen and Sparks (1998) emphasized the need for continuous research in travel distribution. As distribution shifted from traditional to electronic channels at the beginning of the new millennium, both academic researchers and industry practitioners paid great attention to maximizing cooperation while minimizing conflict within the channel of distribution.

In the travel industry, distribution focuses on managing the relationships among the participants in the distribution channel. Traditionally, the hotel distribution channel involved three types of members: hotels, intermediaries (e.g. global distribution systems, and travel agents), and customers. A simplified graphical depiction of the traditional hotel distribution system is shown in Figure 1. There are many specialized channels available for hoteliers, such as consortia and reservation systems, global distribution systems, tour wholesalers, hotel sales representatives, government tourist associations, and travel agents (Kotler et al., 1999). However, their key functions are to provision information from hotels to the final consumers and to “draw” consumers from the last level of the distribution chain to the first.
The traditional intermediaries are at a stage of maturity, some of them showing a tendency to decline. The Global Distribution Systems' (GDS) revenues are likely to diminish as travelers switch from traditional ways of making reservations (such as telephone calls and travel agents) to modern travel portals and hotel companies' Web sites. The central reservation systems play a very important role in the distribution system. They allow hotel independent hotel properties and hotel chains to centralize the offer, and thus, make it easier for the other intermediaries to find the right deal or package for the consumer. However, today, every hotel chain has its own central reservation system which allows them to centralize all the reservation/availability information at the chain level in a form of CRS/regional offices covering multiple states.
The global distribution systems are computerized reservation systems that serve as catalogs for travel agents and other specialized intermediaries (Kotler et al., 1999). Initially developed by the airline industry to increase sales, the GDSs have been rapidly adopted by all organizations involved in travel. Initially there were four GDSs such as Amadeus, Galileo, Sabre, and Worldspan. With the advanced Internet features, GDSs are diversifying their functions to survive in the current online environment. Therefore, they adapt to the new market conditions by entering into partnerships with other hospitality organizations or by providing technology services to hotels and online travel agencies (Carroll & Siguaw, 2003). Currently, six GDSs are available: Amadeus/System One, Apollo/Galileo, AXESS, Fantasia, Sabre, and Worldspan/Abacus. Almost 96% of travel agents in the US work with at least one GDS (Kotler et al., 1999).

Although the distribution structure is not complicated for traditional distribution of products and services, it tends to become more complex as all the companies use the Internet in their distribution efforts and consumers adopt this new environment as a new tool for their travel arrangements. Such a switch created different marketing approaches and modified significantly the relationships among channel members.

2.2.2 Electronic distribution

As the information technology continued to evolve, traditional distribution in the travel industry has undergone substantial transformations. The first significant change that the Internet was expected to induce was disintermediation. Leading researchers (i.e., Hoffman & Novak, 1996) on the topic of electronic commerce believed that cyberspace would be an environment where service providers would be linked directly to the billions of
consumers and the intermediaries will simply disappear. In reality, the intermediaries would not disappear, but they managed to adapt to the new environment by adding Web sites to their portfolio on offline tools. The process was called reintermediation, and it occurred mainly because the producers were not ready to connect to the final consumers (Rosenbloom, 2003).

Another significant change that affected the distribution system was the migration of travelers online. Out of the multitude of products and services advertised and sold over the Internet, travel products and services enjoyed tremendous popularity in recent years. Currently, travel products represent the largest e-commerce product category, accounting for a third of the total number of transactions (Toulantas, 2003). In an industry characterized by growing competition, globalization, increasingly knowledgeable and informed customers, selling hotel rooms at the most advantageous price becomes very challenging and requires an efficient distribution system (O’Connor & Frew, 2004). An efficient distribution system for hotels is based on a multitude of channels that have the same goal of selling hotel rooms online and offline to meet satisfaction of both consumer and company shareholders.

Compared to the traditional distribution channel, the new (electronic) distribution system consists of more components or stages. As depicted in Figure 2, intermediaries play an important role in the system, covering a substantial portion of the total number of transactions. Although they control a substantial portion of hotel bookings, most hotel sales still come from direct hotel sales (65-70 percent), followed by travel agent sales (15-20 percent) and equally online and in-person sales (up to 20 percent each) (Bear Stearns, 2003, cited in Starkov, 2003a). PhoCusWright (cited in Starkov, 2003a) found that over a period of five years (1998 to 2003) the ratio was 54 percent (hotel Web sites) to 46 percent (online
intermediaries), with a tendency for the hotel Web site sales to decrease in favor of online intermediaries. Starkov (2003a) argued that the current situation of the hotel chains is due mainly to their inability to transfer their direct sales knowledge to the Web, coupled with lack of understanding about e-distribution and the aggressiveness of online intermediaries which took advantage of the poor state of the hotel industry after September 11, 2001.

Figure 2. Electronic distribution system in the hotel industry

Today’s distribution system in the hotel industry starts with hotels linked to central reservation systems. However, once the hotels participated in electronic distribution, they adopted the global distribution system approach to centralize the offer and provide

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1 Adapted from Carroll and Siguaw (2003)
standardization. To ease the data transfer, “switch” companies were used as intermediaries between the hotel central reservation systems and GDSs. The main role of the GDSs was to make the hotels available globally to all the travel agents linked into the network. Further, the GDSs are linked to a series of retailers: traditional travel agencies, online travel agencies and portals, and specialized Web sites (Carroll & Siguaw, 2003; Emmer, Tauck, Wilkinson, & Moore, 2003).

Electronic distribution has several notable advantages over the traditional distribution (Hoffman & Novak, 1996). First, evolving into a many-to-many environment, the Internet created an opportunity for hotels to sell and advertise online and use a cheap distribution system. Second, the traditional functions performed by most participants to the traditional distribution channels were transformed under the electronic distribution channels to adapt to the newer and more dynamic environment. Third, a new group of companies, represented by the technology firms, joined the distribution channel and integrated in the distribution channel, and finally, the Internet has created an opportunity for hotels to reduce their mass advertising and concentrate on customized marketing messaging (Lau, Lee, Lam, & Ho, 2001).

Researchers (i.e., Carroll & Siguaw, 2003; Price and Starkov, 2003) focused on identifying the effects of firms’ switching from traditional to electronic distribution and the new type of interfirm relationship within the electronic channels of distribution. Carroll & Siguaw (2003) focused on changes in the distribution channel and the consequences for channel members as a result of switching to electronic distribution. They found that hotel chains are reducing the overall cost of distribution, resulting in higher profits while providing travelers with lower room rates. Also, within the electronic distribution channel, hotels are
encouraging travelers to make reservations on the hotel chain’s Web site rather than on an intermediary Web site, as a way to decrease the cost of distribution and increase customer retention (Carroll & Siguaw, 2003). Intermediaries add significant cost to the final products and services (Sankar, Butler, & Steinfeld, 1995) and if they do not add sufficient value to the final product or service, eventually they may be eliminated from the channel (Jantan, Ndubisi, & Yean, 2003). At the beginning stage of the electronic channel of distribution, electronic devices were used to only link companies in the channel but today they are used across the distribution channel, linking the companies to the final consumer (Sarkar et al., 1995). Up until the end of the 1990s, most customers were reluctant to use the Internet for transactions due to the insecure online environment and insufficient and unreliable online information to support a purchase decision (Wei, Ruis, van Hoof, & Combrink, 2001).

Both academics and practitioners (i.e., Alptekinoglu & Tang, 2005; Berman & Thelen, 2004; Ganesh, 2004) continue to study, elucidate, understand, create and apply models that best serve the interests of firms pursuing sales over multiple channels of distribution. Electronic commerce created many new opportunities for firms to distribute their products over the Web, and thus, researchers (i.e., Webb & Hogan, 2002) are now interested in identifying the ways that companies find the best combination of distribution channels in order to gain optimal advantages from the combination and the ways that companies best allocate their resources so that all channels work at maximum efficiency. Given that in a multiple channel environment the channels compete for the firm’s resources (Webb & Hogan, 2002), competition for the firms’ resources would result in conflicts among members in the channels. On the other hand, by engaging in direct sales over the Web, a firm may be in conflict with its reselling partners (intermediaries) with serious implications on the firm’s
overall distribution strategy (Tsay & Agrawal, 2004). Thus, customers' selection of the channel is believed to depend upon the type of transaction and the degree of customer-vendor involvement (Simmons, Steinfield, & Bouwman, 2002).

O'Connor (2003) identified four major types of business-to-consumer distribution channels: (1) the chain-owned Web site, (2) channels which draw the data from GDSs such as Expedia.com and Travelocity.com, (3) channels based on the databases and reservation engines of the switch companies such as Travelweb.com; (4) Web-based channels with a database of inventory and reservations that is maintained online such as WorldRes.com. In an attempt to determine which distribution channels are going to flourish in the future, O'Connor and Frew (2002) stressed that direct-to-consumer channels are likely to increase in popularity due to their low cost, while channels featuring several intermediaries are expected to become less important. Also, it was predicted that every channel containing traditional brick-and-mortar travel agencies is likely to decline unless the travel agents are present on the Internet to communicate with the travelers. Contradictory results were found by Medina-Munoz, Garcia-Falcon, and Medina-Munoz (2002) in that travel agents continue to represent a significant link in the distribution of hotel rooms. This is because the travel agents are close to the consumers and often tend to determine the type of travel or leisure services that consumers purchase.

Carroll & Siguaw (2003) showed that traditional brick-and-mortar travel agencies are about to decline, primarily as a result of the switch of most airline travel online. Although hotels perceive electronic distribution as superior to traditional distribution, the contemporary distribution channels still have weaknesses such as conflict among channel members (Lau, et al., 2001). Given these weaknesses, Lau et al. (2001) proposed an ideal marketing plan based
on cost minimization, maximization of marketing effectiveness, and tight control of the channel by establishing direct channels to targeted potential consumers with customized messages. Based on the industry’s strong effort to implement the marketing plan, Travel Industry Association of America (2004) identified that the customized-message method appeared to be one of most effective techniques in the electronic distribution channel.

Effective management of distribution costs is one of critical issues in the electronic distribution channel (Dev & Olsen, 2000). With a multitude of channels to choose from, and with an opportunity to distribute online, hotels now have a chance to diminish substantially their distribution costs and focus on the most profitable distribution channels. The industry executives also argued that not only the cost has to be evaluated but also the tactical and strategic benefits of the channel (Thraenhart, 2003).

As the price is one of the most important factors that affects customers’ online transactions (O’Connor, 2003), hotels’ pricing strategies in the channel seem to be key to success in their business. Yesawich et al. (2003) reported that six out of ten travelers actively explore the Web for the lowest price possible because they believe that the Web typically offers lower rates, as opposed to the traditional travel agencies. This perception was formed mainly because (1) consumers knew that most online travel sites were created to compete with traditional brick-and-mortar stores for price, (2) consumers were aware of the lower distribution costs associated with online distribution and (3) consumers were aware of the willingness of hotel companies to sell last minute inventory at very low rates. However, there are information discrepancies about room availability and rate between hotel Web sites and intermediaries in the channels. Such inconsistencies result in adverse reactions by consumers who can trigger purchases with competitors. O’Connor (2003) supported in his research that
there were large inconsistencies in terms of price in the electronic distribution channels because the hotel-owned Web sites were selling rooms at higher rates than intermediaries. However, Enz (2002) purported that deep discounting was not a main predictor for customers' online decision making. Despite the deep discounts, no new consumers enter the market but, at the same time, the existing consumers take advantage of the discount with a devastating effect on hotels' revenues.

Benefiting from the advantages of Internet use, hotel chains have adopted one of the several electronic distribution strategies. Each distribution strategy or business model has its own advantages and/or disadvantages for the parties involved. The most popular business model is the merchant pricing model or the merchant model. This model was largely adopted by online intermediaries as a result of shrinking commissions from travel suppliers, which moved most of their bookings toward their own Web sites. In the hotel industry, the model consists of buying large portions of inventory at a deeply discounted price. Unlike the traditional agency model, whereas a fixed commission was paid to the inventory supplier, the merchant model, a "gross spread," can result from selling over the negotiated price. Typically, online intermediaries such as Expedia.com, Travelocity.com, and Hotels.com have substantial marketing resources, which results in a significant negotiating power. Based on this negotiating power, the online intermediaries could reach gross spreads between 20 and 40 percent. Toulantas (2003) asserted that the merchant model is still a win-win situation for all parties involved in the distribution of hotel rooms. The hotels can sell inventory with low distribution cost, online intermediaries can get higher profits by selling large volumes of inventory, and the travelers usually get a lower rate than by reserving directly through traditional reservation process. The model can result in additional benefits for the online
intermediaries: as online intermediaries agree to buy bulk inventory at predetermined rates, failure to sell results in no loss for the online intermediaries. Although the model is vehemently criticized by both academic and industry research communities because it dilutes hotel brands and results in long term damage for the hotel chains (Starkov, 2003a, b; Starkov & Price, 2003), the current state of the industry still allows most intermediaries to use it and derive benefits from it (Toulantas, 2003).

As a response to the merchant model, most hotels tried to encourage travelers to book directly on their chain-owned Web sites. Such attempts have a tremendous impact on the bottom line of hotels because using the Web site directly to connect to the final consumers carries the lowest distribution cost. However, consumers still seem to prefer booking on intermediary Web sites because they can compare rates at different properties, find out additional information about the property or destination, and make sure that they book at the lowest rate on the Internet. In an attempt to encourage consumers to book directly, many hotels focused on creating consumer-oriented Web sites, in an attempt to imitate the intermediary Web sites and provide similar content with online travel agencies.

In this direction, Starkov and Price (2003a) proposed a general Web strategy structured in three phases which contain three Web distribution sub-strategies for hotels. The first phase is based on overall Web site strategies: (1) optimization strategy with features such as rich content and user-friendliness, (2) search engine strategy by having the hotel chain appear in the top 30 percent of Internet search results, and (3) online distribution strategy by disseminating information and features of the hotel chain to all potential travelers. The second phase focuses on ways to attract potential customers to hotel Web sites by addressing (1) destination Web strategy with an emphasis on leveraging the destination’s
popularity with the hotel, (2) Internet distribution monitor reports by conducting environmental scanning about current competitors, trends, and business models, and (3) email marketing strategy targeted to both actual and potential customers. The third phase is based on hotels' efforts to enhance their online marketing, and includes: (1) online booking technology analysis and vendor comparison, (2) e-marketing services by employing media plans, pay-per-click marketing, and online marketing, and (3) ongoing marketing strategy services for the purpose of building a long-term relationship with top consulting companies for electronic distribution.

Another notable attempt made by hotels is to implement "single image inventory" for distributing their inventory directly to the consumer. In this business model, the customer will be offered the same availability and rates throughout all the distribution channels (Kaldis & Baccorh, 2003). An embryonic start of the single image inventory consists of hotels' offering the "lowest rate guaranteed" programs, in which they claim that the best rate is available only on the company-owned Web site. Additionally, hotels state that they can match the price of any other Web merchants and provide discount to travelers by encouraging them to visit and book directly on the hotel-owned Web sites.

2.2.3 Conflict in hotel electronic distribution

In electronic distribution, channel conflict is viewed as a situation where a manufacturer and its intermediary are engaged in both horizontal and vertical competition simultaneously (Tsay & Agrawal, 2004). Distribution evolves from one channel to a combination of channels, and, in this context, the relationships among channel members change as a result of channel conflict (Webb & Hogan, 2002). The interactions among intra-
firm multiple distribution channels could have positive and negative effects on channel performance as follows: (1) conflict can enhance a firm’s resource allocation mechanism, resulting in better allocation among channels, and (2) conflict can divert channel managers’ focus away from customers, resulting in poor channel performance. Thus, managing channel conflict in ways that maximize channel performance is critical for all firms engaged in multiple channel combinations. According to Tsay and Agrawal (2004), correct channel conflict management will impact seriously the value chain success. They argue that a certain level of channel conflict would ultimately affect the ability of channel members to develop collaborative relationships, which, in turn, will affect channel performance.

Electronic distribution in the hotel industry is characterized by severe conflicts between hotels and intermediaries. Hotels believe that it would be cheaper and more efficient to sell rooms on the Internet using their own Web sites. Hotels often underestimate their power to sell and rely on the online intermediaries to sell more rooms. As Enz (2003) addressed in her research, the main benefit from relying on intermediaries lies in selling the excess or last minute inventory as a large portion of hotel sales are achieved through direct sales. In many instances, hotels could sell the inventory at higher rates, but they had already given large portions of it to the online intermediaries, which usually sell it at lower rates. Selling through intermediaries may favor small and independent hotels, but in the case of large brand chains, who invest millions of dollars in developing their Web sites, the use of intermediary Web sites is more detrimental than helpful. On the other hand, hoteliers realized that the conflict could be avoided by relying on direct Web site distribution by building and maintaining consumer-oriented Web sites. However, this strategy could be only applicable for those who had already chosen the hotel brand and are looking for the rate and property
information. Unless consumers have strong brand preferences, an intermediary Web site is a preferred means because consumers can access a large selection pool of hotel properties.

By implementing the merchant model, many online intermediaries hold remarkable resources at their disposal. Typically, intermediaries generate large profits by selling hotel rooms over the Internet without any risk, which can be used for their promotional advertisement. Unlike chain hotels, small and independent hotels are more dependent upon online travel intermediaries because they gain their exposure to a new consumer group on the Internet, which allows them compete directly with the established hotel chains (Ader & McCoy, 2002). Different implementation distribution strategies employed by hotels, in particular, between brand hotels and independent and/or franchised hotels, result in severe conflicts in controlling their inventories and maintaining brand and price integrity (Starkov, 2003b).

Special attempts have been made by hotel chains to develop new tools to regain control of the value chain and be less dependent upon online intermediaries. First, customers are encouraged to book directly through hotel chains’ Web sites and second, alliances (consortium sites) are formed with competing hotel chains to divert business from major online agencies (Toulantas, 2003). For example, Travelweb.com, the consortium Web site, was developed by six major chain hotels and the technology company, Pegasus, Inc., in order to sell their rooms directly, without any involvement from merchant model Web sites, to their potential and existing customers. Benefits from this new attempt include, first, hotels have enjoyed lowering their distribution costs, second, they do not pay any commissions to travel agents because they no longer use the traditional travel agent, and third, hotels’ presence on the Internet not only decreases distribution costs but also reaches remote customers and
enhance their brand image and customer retention (Carroll & Siguaw, 2003). Booking rooms directly through hotels’ Web sites is by far the most preferred solution for the hotel chains because their Web sites are the cheapest distribution channels.

2.3 The extended technology acceptance model

By adopting the technology acceptance model (TAM) (Davis, Bagozzi, & Warshaw, 1989; Davis, 1989) this study developed measurement constructs applicable for the hotel industry in order to examine travelers’ online booking behavior. The technology acceptance model was originally proposed by Davis et al. (1989) from the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA), which states that consumers’ beliefs influence attitudes, which, in turn, can shape behavioral intention.

![Technology Acceptance Model](image)

Figure 3. Technology Acceptance Model

In the TAM, there are two main constructs to predict user’s attitudes toward intention to use the information technology and actual use of it: (1) perceived usefulness and (2) perceived ease of use (see Figure 3). The model assumes that people tend to use or not use a new system to the extent that they believe it would eventually help them perform the job.

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2 Adapted from Shang, Chen, & Shen (2005).
better, which refers to "perceived usefulness". Perceived usefulness has its origin in the belief that good employees are rewarded for their good performance. Based on this logic, a system with a high perceived usefulness is one for which a user believes that a positive use-performance relationship exists (Davis, 1989). He also observed that some new systems are just too hard to use, and the benefits of using the system are counterbalanced by the difficulty of using these systems, which refers to "perceived ease of use" (Davis, 1989). Assuming effort is a finite resource that a person may allocate to different tasks, Davis claimed that a system perceived as easier to use than others would be more likely to be accepted by users.

The theoretical foundations of Davis' study came from a variety of fields and theories. In an early study about new managerial systems' utilization, one of the factors extracted from an exploratory factor analysis was highly correlated with the self-predicted use of the decision model (Schultz & Slevin, 1975, cited in Davis, 1989). The self-efficacy theory is also used to support the new construct (Bandura, 1982, cited in Davis, 1989). In addition, the cost-benefit theory is used as a foundation for the constructs of perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use. Davis also used research on adoption of innovations: according to Tomatzky and Klein (1982, cited in Davis, 1989) compatibility, relative advantage, and complexity have consistent significant relationships across a wide range of innovations. Davis relied on the convergence of findings from different areas of business research. There is enough evidence, both conceptual and empirical, to state that perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use are two distinct determinants of users' behavior.

Based on findings from previous research from a variety of disciplines, Davis (1989) constructed a scale containing seventeen items for each construct. Then, interviews were conducted to assess the semantic content of the items – the results indicated that only ten
items per construct should be kept. Later, a field and a laboratory study were conducted with 112 and 40 users, respectively. The final number of items was six per construct. Cronbach's alpha for the perceived usefulness was 0.98 and 0.94 for the perceived ease of use. One of the most important findings of Davis' study was that perceived usefulness had a stronger correlation to use than perceived ease of use.

The items used to measure perceived usefulness included items related to difficulty of the job without the system, control over work, ability to work more quickly, accomplishment of more work, ability to make the job easier, and usefulness the new system. The items used in the measurement of perceived ease were related to how confusing, frustrating, rigid, inflexible, controllable, cumbersome, easy to remember, easy to use, and easy to learn the new system was. The TAM uses multiple-items scales to operationalize perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use. Over repeated studies, the Cronbach's alpha of the TAM scales exceeded 0.9 and the scales have exhibited a high degree of convergent, discriminant, and nomological validity (Davis & Venkatesh, 1996). Overall, the wide acceptance of the model was due to the scales' powerful psychometric properties and the large proportion of variance of intention to use that was explained by perceived usefulness and perceived ease (Davis & Venkatesh, 1996). However, the authors were concerned with the fact that the high instrument reliability might have been due to the grouping of items measuring the same construct. In an attempt to gain more insight into the true reliability of the instrument, Davis and Venkatesh (1996) conducted repeated experiments in which they assessed the changes in the reliability and convergent and discriminant validity when the items were intermixed. The results indicated that indeed, the strong psychometric properties of the instrument were not a
result of item grouping and that the item mixing had no effect on the quality of the instrument.

The TAM was developed under contract with IBM Canada Inc. in order to assess the market potential for emerging new computing systems and to direct further investment in new computer system development. In the original model, the external variables included objective system design characteristics, training, computer self-efficacy, and user involvement in design. These external variables were theorized to influence attitudes toward using and actual use of new computing systems via their direct influence on perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use (Davis & Venkatesh, 1996).

Perceived playfulness was introduced later in the framework to measure the extent to which the adoption of the new system is enjoyable to the users. Perceived playfulness refers to an individual’s tendency to interact spontaneously with a computer (Hackbarth, Grover, & Yi, 2003). More generally, the trait of playfulness encompasses a multifaceted construct including cognitive, social, and physical spontaneity, joy, and a sense of humor (Webster & Martocchio, 1992). Liu and Arnett (2000) found that playfulness was one of the four factors associated with Web site success. The construct was measured with items related to enjoyment, attention focus, and excitement (Liu & Arnett, 2000).

External variables impact the perceived usefulness and ease of use, which impact attitudes toward the new system, intention to use, and ultimately, the actual use of the new system. Although the model has been used extensively with a high rate of success, its use was problematic outside the workplace environment, probably because the technology acceptance model’s fundamental constructs do not fully reflect the task environment that users emerge in outside their workplace (Moon & Kim, 2001).
In this study, prior experience with online reservations is believed to impact perceived usefulness (PU), perceived ease of use (PEOU), and perceived playfulness (PP), which, in turn, impact the travelers’ attitudes toward using Web sites for their room reservation, and their actual use. A schematic representation of the proposed model including all the proposed relationships is shown in Figure 4.

Figure 4. The proposed research model

2.3.1 Prior experience with online reservations

Prior experience with online reservations plays an important role in the overall online decision-making process. Rogers (1995) incorporated prior experience as a component of the knowledge stage that impacts the formation of attitudes and decision to adopt an innovation. Prior practice with the innovation enhances trialability and observability of the new system, which are important in the early stages (belief formation) of adopting a new system. Thus, consumers tend to accumulate knowledge and strong beliefs about the new systems, which
will increase their overall attitudes toward the new system (Yoh, Damhorst, Sapp, & Leczniaik, 2003). Thus, these findings can be extrapolated to the travel industry; it is likely that a traveler with previous usage of Web sites for his/her room reservation will develop positive attitudes toward using these Web sites for more reservations in the future. From this perspective, travelers will accumulate knowledge about making room reservations on the Internet and therefore, they will become more skillful at making reservations and will enjoy the process of making reservations online. Thus, their tasks of making reservations will be accomplished efficiently and effortlessly. In this study, prior experience with online reservations is defined as the knowledge about reservation Web sites accumulated through previous usage of such Web sites. Therefore, the following hypotheses have been formulated:

\[ H_1. \] Prior experience with online reservations is positively associated with travelers' perceived usefulness of reservation Web sites.

\[ H_2. \] Prior experience with online reservations is positively associated with travelers' perceived ease of use of reservation Web sites.

\[ H_3. \] Prior experience with online reservations is positively associated with travelers' perceived playfulness of reservation Web sites.

\[ H_4. \] Prior experience with online reservations is positively associated with travelers' attitudes toward using reservation Web sites.

In general, when consumers evaluate the consequences of a product usage, they experience some degree of uncertainty about how accurately their evaluation would correspond to actual consequences of product usage. This is why, consumers tend to abort or block a task when they are uncertain about their evaluation. One factor to reduce this uncertainty is previous experience (Cho, 2004). Eastlick (1996) argued that a behavioral
history influenced the probability of an act to being performed again. Cho (2004) found that
general aspects of Internet usage behavior also impact Internet shopping behavior. Lohse,
Bellman, and Johnson (2000) indicated that a few dimensions of Internet prior experience
such as length of time as an Internet user, frequency, and the amount of time using the
Internet per visit were positively related to intention to purchase online. Therefore, the
following hypothesis has been formulated:

\[ H_5. \text{ Prior experience with online reservations is positively associated with travelers' intentions to use reservation Web sites.} \]

2.3.2 Traditional TAM constructs

2.3.2.1 Perceived usefulness

Yang and Yoo (2004) concur that usefulness is the quality of a system that allows
users to perform a task better. Davis (1989) defined perceived usefulness as the degree to
which a person believes that a particular system would enhance his or her job performance
(Davis, 1989). In the case of the hotel industry, the critical question is whether or not making
online reservations is perceived as more useful, compared to the traditional booking methods.
Also, it is interesting to assess the perceived usefulness of the process of making reservations
argued that perceived usefulness has a more important role in determining actual use of the
new system/medium, while perceived ease of use seems to be less important, especially later
in the adoption process.

Perceived usefulness was measured with items related to the improvement of the task
of making room reservations by using the new medium or technology: the hotel reservation
Web site. Thus, participants were asked questions about their ability to accomplish their task of making reservations more quickly (Hsu & Lu, 2004). In addition, it was found that there are a few more important Web site characteristics that, overall, relate to the perceived usefulness of the hotel reservations Web sites: (1) information quality, (2) security, and (3) customization.

Information quality is viewed as a central Web site attribute. The way information is presented in the format of content and organization can make its utilization easier or harder (Rosen & Purinton, 2004). It was found that the Web site content should be based on eye-catching graphics without overloading the consumer with information, while the designers’ goals should be to give travelers access to the information they need in the fastest way. Web designers argued that one of the most important goals of the Web site information quality is to provide free information to actual and potential consumers (Geissler, 2001). This is especially true in the hotel industry by considering the intangible nature of hotel products and services because most of the attributes of the products and services are easily transferable into information. The information quality of the Web site was often quantified in terms of page count, text volume, number of video- and audio- clips, and all these attributes formed a category that was referred to as “volumetrics” (Yeung & Lu, 2004). In this study, information quality was measured by items referring to the existence of detailed information about the hotel or destination planned to be visited, and the existence of links to the complementary service providers (i.e. restaurants, car rental companies, shuttle services, concierge, etc.).

In the beginning of the Internet era, security was a critical issue that consumers did not trust the Web sites and were reluctant to make purchases on the Web. As technology
improved, consumers gained confidence in the new transaction medium and tended to minimize their security concerns on the Web. As Belanger, Hiller, and Smith (2002) stated, privacy, security, and trustworthiness are still important components that can contribute to the growth of the business-to-consumer commerce on the Internet. Security is viewed as protection from the conditions or events that can cause damage to data or persons on the Internet. Although Web site security features have improved considerably during last a few years, most consumers fear that Internet transactions are not totally secure (Belanger, et al., 2002). Also, in their study related to the most salient attributes of Web sites, Yang, Ahmed, Ghingold, Boon, Mei, & Hwa (2003) examined a rating of Web site characteristics, in which security was rated as high by online shoppers.

Karayanni and Baltas (2003) asserted that customization refers to the optimization of multimedia attributes to the degree that they provide custom-tailored solutions, allowing consumers to customize preferences and enabling organizations to provide customized services based on consumers' preferences. Customization is based on previous interactions between the consumer and the Web site. In the hotel industry, the room reservation Web sites can remember customers' preferences and allows them to make reservations more quickly. The addition of artificial intelligence to the process can enhance customization because technology allows companies to design and market customized products and services based on the information gained through past interactions between the company and the consumer (Karayanni & Baltas, 2003).

It is expected that consumers would be likely to spend their time doing other things than learning how to use a new medium/system if they perceive it as easy to use (Bruner & Kumar, 2005). Also, according to Bruner and Kumar (2005), systems that are easier to use
are perceived as more fun than systems that are more cumbersome. Researchers (i.e., Bruner and Kumar, 2005; Hsu and Lu, 2004; Yang and Yoo, 2004) identified that the perceived usefulness of a system has significant positive relationships with attitudes toward that system. Therefore,

\[ H_6. \text{ The perceived usefulness of reservation Web sites is positively associated with travelers' attitudes toward using reservation Web sites.} \]

2.3.2.2 Perceived ease of use

According to Saade & Bahli (2005), individuals are more likely to use a new technology if they perceive it as easy to use. Chung and Tan (2004) mentioned the construct “perceived ease of use” and defined it as “the degree to which somebody believes that using a particular system would be free of effort” (p. 870). Perceived ease of use was measured with such items as the skills necessary to use the new medium/technology or how easy it is to use it (Hsu & Lu, 2004) or to what degree the use of the new technology/medium is effort-free (Vijayasarathy, 2004). Perceived ease of use was measured via self reported items such as the ease with which online shoppers can search for information on the Web sites, purchase products and services, and pay for those products and services (Hsu & Lu, 2004; Shih, 2004).

Researchers (i.e., Shih, 2004; Yang & Yoo, 2004) seem to agree that perceived ease of use influences perceived usefulness, but not vice versa and is a major construct to predict user’s attitudes toward Web sites (Shih, 2004; Vijayasarathy, 2004; Yang & Yoo, 2004). These relationships are explored in the context of the hotel industry by the following hypotheses:
H7. The perceived ease of use of reservation Web sites is positively associated with travelers' attitude toward using reservation Web sites.

H8. The perceived ease of use of reservation Web sites is positively associated with travelers' perceived usefulness of reservation Web sites.

2.3.2.3 Perceived playfulness

Perceived playfulness (PP) was initially defined by Dewey (1913, cited in Webster & Martocchio, 1992) as an individual's predisposition to be playful. Webster and Martocchio asserted that although the construct of perceived playfulness is multifaceted, only cognitive spontaneity is critical in examining perceived playfulness in human-computer interactions. Their instrument for perceived playfulness was based on the “Adult Cognitive Spontaneity Scale” (ACS), composed of 15 items asking respondents to rate their agreement on a 7-point scale on descriptives such as spontaneous, unimaginative, and curious.

Chung and Tan (2004) explored the antecedents of perceived playfulness in a TAM context and found that perceived playfulness was determined by both cognitive (focused attention and control) and Web site characteristics (informational content, speed, ease of use, variety, navigation, and feed-back). Examining the perceived playfulness construct in the context of the expectation-confirmation model, Lin, Wu, and Tsay (2005) found that the integration of perceived playfulness in the model can help to explain repeat users' online behavior online. However, they argued that there is a need for better understanding of the measures for perceived playfulness in order to create Web sites with enhanced meaningful content. (Lin et al., 2005). The perceived playfulness construct was measured by three items related to the extent to which users have a pleasant experience while visiting online portals.
Researchers (i.e., Chung and Tan, 2004; Lin et al., 2005) proved that a positive relationship existed between perceived ease of use and perceived playfulness. Therefore, the following hypotheses were formulated:

\[ H_9. \text{The perceived ease of use of reservation Web sites is positively associated with travelers' perceived playfulness of reservation Web sites.} \]

\[ H_{10}. \text{The perceived playfulness of reservation Web sites is positively associated with travelers' attitudes toward using reservation Web sites.} \]

2.3.3 Attitude, intention, and actual use

Attitude is generally defined as an individual's inclination to exhibit a certain response toward a concept or object (Vijayasarathy, 2004). Vijayasarathy argued that although an objective measurement for the actual behavior would be ideal, in reality it is hard to obtain. However, there is enough evidence to suggest that there is a strong positive relationship between the intention to use and actual use. In most studies, the behavioral intention was used as a surrogate for actual behavior and was defined as the consumers' intent to use the new technology/medium. However, Yang and Yoo (2004) argued that intention could not predict long term behavior and, therefore, actual behavior should be used in TAM. The reliability of self-report measures is doubted by researchers (Henderson & Divett, 2003) as they argued that actual log data reflecting users' behavior should be used until additional research is able to confirm that self-report estimates are reliable.

Attitudes toward using a new system were generally measured by self-reporting items related to whether or not consumers like or dislike the new system. In general, the number of items used to capture the attitude construct is fairly small, such as two items in studies of
Bruner & Kumar (2005), Hsu and Lu (2004), and Shih (2004). Researchers (i.e., Legris, Ingham, & Collerette, 2003; Shih, 2004) agreed that positive attitudes toward a new system result in an intention to use that system. This relationship has been proven in general electronic commerce (Bruner & Kumar, 2005). However, in the context of the hotel industry, the relationship is explored via the following hypothesis:

\[ H_{11}. \text{Travelers' attitudes toward reservation Web sites are positively associated with their intention to use reservation Web sites.} \]

There is a multitude of studies (Bruner & Kumar, 2005; Chung & Tan, 2004; Legris, et al., 2003 Liaw & Huang, 2003) that use the TAM to determine the users' behavior with respect to new innovative systems such as shopping Web sites, online gaming, or information search portals. Among these studies, there are studies in which the last variable explored is intention to use, relying upon the fact that a declared intention to use is a sign of actual behavior (Bruner & Kumar, 2005; Liaw & Huang, 2003). In addition, other studies explored the relationship between the intention to use and actual use of the new system (Chung & Tan, 2004; Legris, et al., 2003).
CHAPTER 3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Measurement

Building on the TAM framework, this study used the six constructs shown in Figure 4 to examine respondents’ perceptions, attitudes, and intentions to use Web sites for their reservation. Respondents’ perceptions were measured with three constructs: (1) perceived usefulness, (2) perceived ease of use, and (3) perceived playfulness.

Perceived usefulness was operationalized with eight items, measuring the extent to which a Web site was viewed as a useful tool for travelers to make an online reservation (Davis, 1989; Grandon & Pearson, 2004; Lai & Li, 2005; Shih, 2004). Four items focused on completeness of information (i.e. to whether or not the Web site provided information about the hotel or destination, or had links to complementary service providers) (Lederer, Maupin, Sena, & Zhuang, 2000; Moon & Kim, 2001), security (Vijayasarathy, 2004), and customization (Moon & Kim, 2001). Two additional items measured the extent to which a Web site improved the task of making a reservation (Davis, 1989) by enabling travelers to make a reservation quickly (Shih, 2004). All items were rated on a 7-point scale anchored with (1) strongly disagree to (7) strongly agree.

Perceived ease of use was measured with four items by gauging on how easy (Saade & Bahli, 2005) and user-friendly (Moon & Kim, 2001, Lederer, et al., 2000) it was for travelers to navigate the Web site and to obtain the necessary information (Davis, 1989; Hsu & Lu, 2004; Lai & Li, 2005; Shih, 2004). These four items were rated on a 7-point scale, ranging from (1) strongly disagree to (7) strongly agree.
Perceived playfulness was operationalized with six items measuring the extent to which the Web site was entertaining and fun (Moon & Kim, 2001; Saade & Bahli, 2005), and to what degree the process of making online reservations captured the travelers’ attention and kept them focused (Lin, et al., 2005; Moon & Kim, 2001; Saade & Bahli, 2005). All these items were rated on a 7-point scale ranging from (1) strongly disagree to (7) strongly agree.

Travelers’ attitudes toward using Web sites for reservations were operationalized with five items on a semantic-differential scale (i.e., bad-good, worthless-valuable, foolish-wise, undesirable-desirable, and bad idea-good idea) (Bello, Pitts, & Etzel, 1983; Berger & Mitchell, 1989; Cox & Cox, 1988; Dröge, 1989; MacKenzie & Lutz, 1989; Munch & Swasy, 1988; Sujan & Bettman, 1989). Behavioral intentions were measured with five items, such as, *I will make more reservations on this Web site* (Mathwick, Malhotra, Rigdon, 2001); *I will bookmark this Web site for later use* (Moon & Kim, 2001); *I will visit this Web site again* (Lai & Li, 2005); *I will recommend this Web site to others* (Saade & Bahli, 2005); and *when I need to make a reservation online, this is the first site I will visit* (Mathwick, et al., 2001).

Additionally, overall respondents’ online reservation experience and Internet usage were measured along with their socio-demographic profile such as age, gender, academic major and classification.

3.2 Study design

This study was conducted in two different stages. The first stage was a pilot test of the survey questionnaire. The pilot test was conducted with students, faculty, and staff in the Department of Apparel, Educational Studies, and Hospitality Management at Iowa State
University. They were asked to visit the questionnaire’s Web page and complete it. A review form was given to respondents for their comments and suggestions. In addition, a few personal interviews were conducted with potential travelers to ensure clarity of questionnaire items.

After the pilot test, an online field survey was conducted with 11,387 undergraduate and graduate students in the colleges of Family and Consumer Sciences, Business, and Liberal Arts and Sciences at Iowa State University. The list of email addresses was obtained from the Office of the Registrar at Iowa State University. The participants were asked to read and sign a consent form, and then they were directed to visit the questionnaire’s Web page.

The sample was split randomly into two subsamples. The first subsample, called the “hotel” subsample, was asked to visit one of five listed hotel-owned Web sites and complete the questionnaire. The other subsample, called the “intermediary” subsample, was asked to visit one of five listed intermediary Web sites, and complete the questionnaire. Each subsample was contacted by email and invited to participate in the study. Five hotel companies were chosen for this study, based on their rankings by number of rooms: Best Western, Holiday Inn, Comfort Inn, Marriott, and Sheraton (MKG Consulting, 2005). The second subsample had a similar task, but the Web site under evaluation was an intermediary. Five intermediary Web sites were selected based on their popularity: Expedia, Travelocity, Orbitz, Hotwire, and Hotels (Melvin, 2005). Both subsamples used the same questionnaire.

There is a multitude of studies that used students as their samples to test the proposed theoretical relationships (Chung & Tan, 2004; Lin, et al., 2005; Oh, 2000). Many empirical

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3 Copies of the questionnaire are available in Appendix B3 and C3.
4 Copies of the recruiting email messages are available in Appendices B1 and C1.
studies about the use of the Internet for shopping used students or active Internet users (Vijayasarathy, 2004). Although generalizability is limited, student samples were used extensively because of their computer literacy and their extensive use of the Internet. Despite a sample of actual hotel customers was preferable for this study; students were used for a few reasons: (1) this study focuses on Web site evaluation, in which a student sample could provide useful information due to their familiarity with the Internet, (2) students are very likely to be intensive Internet reservation makers in the future (Chung & Tan, 2004; Oh, 2000), and (3) by using students, the computer literacy variance is likely to be low (Lin, et al., 2004). To increase the response rate, all participating students in this study were entered in a drawing for four $50 gift certificates available at a local retail store.

3.3 Data analysis

The data were collected over a period of two weeks. The data analysis consisted of two stages: (1) descriptive analysis, (2) model testing and proposition validation.

The first step was to perform a missing value analysis. Due to the small percentage of missing values, the cases containing missing values were removed from the analysis. Then, a descriptive analysis was conducted to identify respondents’ demographic profile. Then, a subsample comparison was conducted on the TAM constructs and t-tests were employed to identify whether or not the two sub-samples were significantly different in the proposed constructs. In addition, a broad content analysis was done with respondents’ comments about the overall reservation experience.

The second stage of the data analysis was to test the study’s propositions and proposed theoretical model. First, Cronbach’s alpha coefficient was calculated to test for the
reliability of the scales for each proposed construct. Then, the study's propositions were tested using a series of multiple regressions.
CHAPTER 4. RESULTS

4.1 Descriptive analysis

4.1.1 Respondents' demographic profile

Of 11,387 students contacted, 1,119 respondents participated in this study, resulting in a response rate of 9.82 percent. There were 562 usable responses for the hotel subsample (9.88 percent response rate), and 557 usable responses for the intermediary subsample (9.76 percent response rate).

The sample consisted predominantly of females (66.6 percent), between 19 and 21 years old (57 percent), with senior classification (35.2 percent) (see Table 1). The respondents were asked a few questions about their Internet experience with online reservations as well as their general Internet behavior. Although it might be expected that respondents would use the Internet extensively, the results showed that the majority of respondents (64.5 percent) used the Internet less than five hours a day.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>374</td>
<td>33.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>745</td>
<td>66.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 years old or younger</td>
<td>688</td>
<td>61.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22-25 years old</td>
<td>311</td>
<td>27.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26 years old or older</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>10.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classification</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freshman</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>13.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sophomore</td>
<td>188</td>
<td>16.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior</td>
<td>265</td>
<td>23.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior</td>
<td>394</td>
<td>35.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>9.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other classifications</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. Respondents' demographic profile (n=1,119)
Also, most respondents made fewer than five room reservations in 2004 (95.5 percent) and most of them indicated that they had limited experience with online reservations (Table 2). Despite the small number of reservations made, more than half of the respondents had visited these Web sites before (51.2 percent).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average hours spent on the Internet daily</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 hours or fewer</td>
<td>722</td>
<td>64.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-10 hours</td>
<td>297</td>
<td>26.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 hours or more</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>8.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online room reservations made in 2004</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 reservations or fewer</td>
<td>1,069</td>
<td>95.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-10 reservations</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 reservations or more</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience with online reservations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limited</td>
<td>526</td>
<td>47.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>489</td>
<td>43.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extensive</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>9.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have visited the Web site before</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>573</td>
<td>51.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>546</td>
<td>48.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. Respondents' Internet behavior (n=1,119)

4.1.2 Comparisons of Web site characteristics – hotel/intermediary subsamples

In order to compare the travelers' different perceptions (i.e., usefulness, ease of use, and playfulness), attitudes and intentions to use one of the two online reservation channels (hotel-owned Web sites and intermediary Web sites), t-tests were conducted. The significant differences between the two groups are summarized in Table 3.

Out of 18 perception items, only 5 items appeared to be significantly different, such as "The Web site has customizable features", "The Web site has links to other travel-related services", "The Web site has detailed information about the city of Orlando", and "I was so excited to browse this Web site for making a reservation that I was not aware of the time that
These items had significantly higher ratings in the intermediary subsample than in the hotel subsample. The results indicated that the hotel-owned reservation Web sites were rated higher only on one item under the perceived ease of use construct: *The Web site has no pop-up features so that I could focus on making a reservation.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Construct</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- This Web site has customizable features to make a reservation (i.e., my preferences, my trips, my itineraries, etc.)</td>
<td>Perceived Usefulness</td>
<td>5.21</td>
<td>0.026*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- This Web site has links to other travel-related services (i.e., restaurants, car rentals, shuttle services, etc.)</td>
<td>Perceived Usefulness</td>
<td>5.11</td>
<td>0.000**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- This Web site has detailed information about the city of Orlando (i.e., attractions, calendars of events, transportation, dining, recreation, etc.)</td>
<td>Perceived Usefulness</td>
<td>4.68</td>
<td>0.046*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- The Web site has no pop-up features so that I could focus on making a reservation.</td>
<td>Perceived Ease of use</td>
<td>5.75</td>
<td>0.000**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- I was so excited to browse this Web site for making a reservation that I was not aware of the time that had elapsed.</td>
<td>Perceived Playfulness</td>
<td>3.30</td>
<td>0.046*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- I will make more reservations on this Web site.</td>
<td>Intention</td>
<td>4.59</td>
<td>0.001*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- I will bookmark this Web site for later use.</td>
<td>Intention</td>
<td>3.09</td>
<td>0.000**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- When I need to make a reservation online, this is the first site I will visit.</td>
<td>Intention</td>
<td>3.71</td>
<td>0.000**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- I will visit this Web site again.</td>
<td>Intention</td>
<td>4.31</td>
<td>0.000**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- I will recommend this Web site to others.</td>
<td>Intention</td>
<td>4.09</td>
<td>0.000**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* p < 0.05  
** p < 0.01  

Table 3. Comparison between the hotel and intermediary subsamples
Three items from the perceived usefulness construct were rated higher in the intermediary subsample. This result seemed to suggest that intermediary Web sites were better than hotel-owned Web sites in terms of providing customizable features, links to additional service providers, and detailed information about the destination. These results are not surprising in the sense that the intermediary Web sites typically provide a more flexible reservation-making process, and also typically offer rich content about the destination, as opposed to the hotel-owned reservation Web sites which provide mostly information pertaining to their properties.

No attitude items were found significantly different between the two subsamples. However, all five items from the intentions construct were rated significantly higher in the intermediary subsample, indicating that, overall, travelers had higher intentions to revisit intermediary Web sites rather than hotel-owned Web sites.

4.1.3 General comments about the reservation experience

The respondents were asked to describe briefly what would make them come back to the Web site that they had visited, and to provide their comments about the reservation process (Table 4). The findings were interesting as they provided deeper insight into what could potentially cause travelers to make reservations on one type of Web site over the other.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comments</th>
<th>Hotel subsample</th>
<th>Intermediary subsample</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Utility of Web sites</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Security concerns</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rate comparison</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other comments</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>107</strong></td>
<td><strong>78</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4. Summary of comments about overall Web site evaluation
In the hotel subsample, most respondents indicated that they would come back if the Web sites provided cheap deals and discounts. This finding was somehow predictable because, generally, respondents were not members of hotel loyalty/reward programs and most of them viewed hotel room as commodities. This was by far the most cited reason for coming back to a hotel-owned Web site. Also, many respondents indicated that they would come back because using such Web sites was really easy and straightforward. Ease of making reservations was a widely cited reason.

In the intermediary subsample, a few trends were observed as well. First, it seemed that the predominant reason to return was the ease of use of the Web sites. For these respondents, it appeared that finding a good deal was not only useful, but also easy and exciting, to make online reservations.

Offering the lowest room rates was additional reason for respondents to revisit the Web site. Apparently, most respondents believed that the intermediary Web sites provided the best rates online. Another feature rated as important on the intermediary Web sites was the possibility to compare rates across different hotel properties at the destination.

Surprisingly, even though today’s companies claim that their Web sites are totally secure and travelers have nothing to worry about making online transactions, there are still serious concerns about online security among respondents. This finding is even more interesting as it comes from a generation of respondents that is familiar with the advancements of technology and is characterized by intensive technology use. The number and imperative nature of these comments led to the conclusion that the Internet is still perceived as an insecure transaction environment. Also, it was interesting that no matter what
technology is implemented, travelers still need to talk to a human being when making a room reservation.

Overall, the comments from the both subsamples addressed that the intermediary Web sites were excellent for rate comparison across multiple properties and very easy to use. However, both hotel-owned and intermediary Web sites were perceived as not entirely secure. Despite some minor suggestions in terms of functionality and mechanics of the Web sites, in general, both types of Web sites were good tools for those who wanted to find a good room rate on the Internet and make a reservation easily and effortlessly.

4.2 Model testing

The measurement items used in this study were extensively validated by previous research (Davis, 1989; Grandon & Pearson, 2004; Hsu & Lu, 2004; Lai & Li, 2005; Lederer, et al., 2000; Lin, et al., 2004; Mathwick, et al., 2001; Moon & Kim, 2001; Saade & Bahli, 2005; Shih, 2004; Vijayasarathy, 2004, Wober & Gretzel, 2000). Further analysis on the reliability of the scales was conducted by examining the Cronbach’s alpha for each construct. As presented in Table 5, all constructs have alpha scores of .80 or higher indicating good reliability for each construct.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construct</th>
<th>Number of items</th>
<th>Full Cronbach's alpha</th>
<th>Hotel subsample Cronbach's alpha</th>
<th>Intermediary subsample Cronbach's alpha</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Perceived usefulness</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>.86</td>
<td>.87</td>
<td>.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived ease of use</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>.82</td>
<td>.85</td>
<td>.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived playfulness</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>.89</td>
<td>.89</td>
<td>.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>.94</td>
<td>.93</td>
<td>.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intention</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>.89</td>
<td>.89</td>
<td>.88</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5. Reliability of constructs
The study’s model was tested with a series of regression analyses to identify the significant relationships among measurement constructs. The overall scores for perceived usefulness, ease of use, playfulness, attitudes, and intentions were calculated using summated item scales. The results are summarized in Table 6 and Figure 5.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Equation</th>
<th>Independent variable(s)</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>β</th>
<th>R²</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>Hypotheses</th>
<th>Result</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Usefulness</td>
<td>Prior experience</td>
<td>1.525</td>
<td>.316</td>
<td>.143</td>
<td>.020</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>H₁</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ease of use</td>
<td>Prior experience</td>
<td>.641</td>
<td>.189</td>
<td>.101</td>
<td>.010</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>H₂</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Playfulness</td>
<td>Prior experience</td>
<td>1.048</td>
<td>.312</td>
<td>.100</td>
<td>.010</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>H₃</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Usefulness</td>
<td>Prior experience</td>
<td>.789</td>
<td>.230</td>
<td>.074</td>
<td>.485</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ease of use</td>
<td>Prior experience</td>
<td>1.149</td>
<td>.036</td>
<td>.685</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>H₈</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Playfulness</td>
<td>Prior experience</td>
<td>.592</td>
<td>.283</td>
<td>.056</td>
<td>.195</td>
<td>.037</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude</td>
<td>Prior experience</td>
<td>.754</td>
<td>.196</td>
<td>.094</td>
<td>.357</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>H₄</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Usefulness</td>
<td>Prior experience</td>
<td>.200</td>
<td>.026</td>
<td>.265</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>H₆</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ease of use</td>
<td>Prior experience</td>
<td>.235</td>
<td>.043</td>
<td>.186</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>H₇</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Playfulness</td>
<td>Prior experience</td>
<td>.186</td>
<td>.021</td>
<td>.242</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>H₁₀</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intention</td>
<td>Prior experience</td>
<td>.388</td>
<td>.276</td>
<td>.036</td>
<td>.290</td>
<td>.159</td>
<td>H₅</td>
<td>Rejected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude</td>
<td>Prior experience</td>
<td>.708</td>
<td>.034</td>
<td>.531</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>H₁₁</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Table 6. Results of regression analysis

**H₁.** Prior experience with online reservations is positively associated with travelers’ perceived usefulness of reservation Web sites.

Regression analysis confirmed that there existed a significant positive relationship between prior experience with online reservations and perceived usefulness. Thus, Hypothesis 1 was supported \((p < 0.01)\).

**H₂.** Prior experience with online reservations is positively associated with travelers’ perceived ease of use of reservation Web sites.

Prior experience appeared to have a significant positive relationship with perceived ease of use. This result supported Hypothesis 2 \((p < 0.01)\).
Prior experience with online reservations is positively associated with travelers' perceived playfulness of reservation Web sites.

Prior experience was found to significantly impact perceived playfulness. The analysis supported Hypothesis 3 (p < 0.01).

Prior experience with online reservations is positively associated with travelers' attitudes toward using reservation Web sites.

As shown in Table 5, there was enough evidence to demonstrate that prior experience had a significant positive impact on attitudes toward using reservation Web sites. Based on this result, Hypothesis 4 was supported (p < 0.01).

Prior experience with online reservations is positively associated with travelers' intentions to use reservation Web sites.

The relationship between prior experience and intention to use reservation Web sites was found not significant. Therefore, Hypothesis 5 was rejected (p > 0.1).

The perceived usefulness of reservation Web sites is positively associated with travelers’ attitudes toward using reservation Web sites.

Based on the results of regression analysis, the relationship between perceived usefulness and attitudes was found to be significantly positive. Therefore, Hypothesis 6 was supported (p < 0.01).

The perceived ease of use of reservation Web sites is positively associated with travelers' attitudes toward using reservation Web sites.

Similar to the previous proposition, regression analysis indicated that a significant positive relationship existed between perceived ease of use and attitudes toward using reservation Web sites. Therefore, Hypothesis 7 was supported (p < 0.01).
**H8.** The perceived ease of use of reservation Web sites is positively associated with travelers' perceived usefulness of reservation Web sites.

In this study, perceived ease of use was found to have a significant positive impact on perceived usefulness. Therefore, Hypothesis 8 was supported (p < 0.01).

**H9.** The perceived ease of use of reservation Web sites is positively associated with travelers' perceived playfulness of reservation Web sites.

Similar to previous proposition, perceived ease of use was found to have a significant positive impact on perceived playfulness. Therefore, Hypothesis 9 was supported (p < 0.01).

**H10.** The perceived playfulness of reservation Web sites is positively associated with travelers' attitudes toward using reservation Web sites.

A significant positive relationship between perceived playfulness and attitudes was found and therefore, Hypothesis 10 was supported (p < 0.01).

**H11.** Travelers' attitudes toward reservation Web sites are positively associated with their intentions to use reservation Web sites.

Based on the results from regression analysis, Hypothesis 11 was supported (p < 0.01). As predicted by the traditional TAM literature, the attitudes toward using reservation Web sites had a significant positive relationship with intentions to use reservation Web sites.

The study's model was tested by utilizing multiple regressions. In this model, approximately 36 percent of the variance in attitudes toward using reservation Web sites was explained by respondents' prior experience with reservation Web sites and their perceptions of usefulness, ease of use, and playfulness (p < 0.01). Perceived usefulness had the greatest impact on attitude ($\beta = 0.265$), followed by perceived playfulness ($\beta = 0.242$), perceived ease of use ($\beta = 0.186$), and prior experience ($\beta = 0.094$). Approximately 29 percent of total
variance in respondents' intentions to use a reservation Web sites was explained by attitudes toward using reservation Web sites (p < 0.01), and thus, attitudes appeared to be a key determinant of intentions to use reservation Web sites.

In both subsamples, perceived usefulness appeared to have the highest impact on attitudes to use these Web sites. In addition, attitudes toward using reservation Web sites was an essential determinant of intentions to use these Web sites. An additional comparison of the results between the two subsamples revealed only minor differences. In the hotel subsample, prior experience did not have a significant impact on perceived ease of use, attitudes, and intentions, while in the intermediary subsample, prior experience appeared to be a significant predictor of intentions.

* A significant relationship at p < 0.01

Figure 5. The research model (full sample)
CHAPTER 5. CONCLUSIONS

5.1 Discussion

This study asserted that the acceptance of reservation Web sites could be predicted by the extended TAM framework. In the context of the hotel industry, prior experience, perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, and perceived playfulness have an impact on attitudes toward using reservation Web sites. Moreover, it was concluded that attitudes were direct determinants of travelers' intentions to use these Web sites for reservations.

Although minimal, the impact of prior experience on perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, perceived playfulness, and attitudes was significant. This indicates that prior experience has only a small effect in shaping travelers' attitudes and intentions to use reservation Web sites. The limited experience of travelers used in this study could explain why the impact of travelers' prior experience on the traditional TAM constructs was marginal. However, it was concluded that prior experience had the role of only familiarizing travelers with the reservation Web sites, which might increase their knowledge about the capability and mode of utilization of these Web sites.

It appeared that the most important determinant of travelers' attitudes to use reservation Web sites was perceived usefulness. Among Web site characteristics of perceived usefulness, the efficiency and speed of the reservation Web sites seemed to be very important attributes to predict respondents' attitudes toward using reservation Web sites. Another important factor considered in the process of online reservations was detailed information about the hotel. Customization capabilities and links to additional service providers had significant impact on travelers' attitudes toward using reservation Web sites. This is
explicable by the fact that today’s users want an efficient and fast reservation experience, capable of delivering the best room rate and a multitude of information in a convenient way. In addition, it appeared that Internet security played a major role in the perceived usefulness of reservation Web sites. Overall, perceived usefulness had a strong impact on attitudes toward using reservation Web sites, and thus, it was concluded that today’s travelers looked for efficient, fast, and secure reservation Web sites.

Another important characteristic of reservation Web sites was perceived ease of use. This is interpretable by the fact that today’s travelers want to use Web sites that are easy to understand. Also, it was found that the respondents were concerned about annoying pop-up windows, which results in negative impact on their reservation experiences. Perceived ease of use was found to have a significant impact on attitudes toward using reservation Web sites, as predicted by the TAM framework. Also, as predicted by the TAM framework, perceived ease of use had a strong, significant impact on both perceived usefulness and perceived playfulness, indicating that the adoption of a new technology is dependent upon how user-friendly the system is.

Also, it was found that perceived playfulness had an important role in the use of reservation Web sites. The findings of this study suggest that in order for a Web site to be used for reservations, it has to be fun and entertaining. Also, the Web site must allow its visitors to engage in the reservation experience and to capture their attention so that they would not realize the time that had elapsed or distracting noises around them. Considering the previous findings of this study related to the perceived usefulness and ease of use, the reservation Web sites have to capture the attention of travelers, but, at the same time, not overwhelm them with content. To increase acceptability of new systems, both hotels and
intermediaries should incorporate playful characteristics that would not only enhance the
hedonic aspect of the Web site, but also make the travelers engage deeper in the Web site
navigation experience. Also, by creating an enjoyable environment, hotels and intermediaries
could reduce stress and pressure caused by the task of making a reservation and would allow
travelers to engage in a more pleasant and less stressful online reservation process. Therefore,
it was concluded that, creating Web sites that enhance playfulness could be beneficial for
reservation Web sites.

As predicted by the TAM literature, attitudes had a significant impact on intentions to
use the Web sites for reservations. This implies that no matter what type of Web site is
visited (hotel-owned or intermediary), once the attitudes toward using these Web sites are
formed, the intentions are fairly strong as well. However, comparing intention ratings from
both subsamples, it appeared that the respondents who visited intermediary Web sites had
stronger intentions to use these Web sites than hotel-owned Web sites. It is possibly due to
the opportunity to compare rates available on intermediary Web sites or due to the strong
belief that intermediary Web sites offer the best room rates available on the Internet.

The three main constructs identified as antecedents of attitudes toward using
reservation Web sites explained substantial portions of the variance of attitudes toward using
reservation Web sites in both subsamples. These results clearly pointed out that the important
roles of perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, and perceived playfulness in positively
influencing respondents’ intentions to use reservation Web sites. The extended TAM model
used in this study demonstrated that the underlying relationships between the TAM
constructs, such as perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, perceived playfulness,
attitudes, and intentions are valid in the hotel industry. These findings provided a better
understanding of the circumstances under which the use of reservation Web sites can be explored and predicted.

Judging from the significance and magnitude of the regression coefficients, it was concluded that the most powerful predictor of attitudes toward using reservation Web sites was perceived usefulness. This finding is explained by the primary purpose of any reservation Web site: to facilitate the reservation-making process, and to offer travelers an alternative to the time-consuming traditional direct reservation process. Direct comparisons with traditional distribution channels (such as direct calls to the hotels) were only briefly mentioned in the comments section.

The respondents indicated that intermediary Web sites had higher perceived usefulness than hotel-owned Web sites – a finding that is consistent with the previous model analysis findings: the respondents are looking for an easy, convenient, and effortless way not only to make reservations, but to acquire information about additional service providers at the destination and to access these providers easily. Also, due to the larger popularity of intermediary Web sites among respondents, and in the absence of respondents’ strong loyalty toward hotel companies, intentions to revisit and recommend reservation Web sites to others were higher in the intermediary subsample. This seemed to suggest that respondents perceived the intermediary Web sites as more useful reservation channel than hotel-owned Web sites.

Despite the favorable comments on the ease of use and convenience, a substantial number of respondents viewed Web sites merely as a source of travel information. Although there has been tremendous progress in safety and security of the Internet, there still exist
security concerns in senses that the respondents had limited experience in making room
reservations online and were aware of potential risks associated with online reservations.

It was interesting to see how enthusiastically the respondents commented on their
intentions to use these types of Web sites in the future. This could be interpreted in two
different ways (1) most respondents reported that they would come back to these Web sites
in the future, and (2) it is important to recognize that, although respondents do not use these
Web sites broadly as reservation tools, they are using these Web sites as travel information
sources.

Commoditization of the hotel industry was found to have an impact on the way
respondents reserved hotel rooms on the Internet. There were a few comments respondents’
interest in brand loyalty. However, despite the efforts of the industry to engage in
relationship marketing to increase customer retention, it seemed that the respondents of this
study follow a general consumer trend, in which the main criterion to differentiate among
different hotel options is room rate. This is most probably due to the fact that the today’s
hotel industry is facing a very knowledgeable traveler, who can find the best deal with only a
few mouse clicks, and, most importantly, who does not care about the overall hotel stay
experience but rather about the economic aspect of it.

Overall, it was concluded that, consistent with the TAM literature, perceived
usefulness, perceived ease of use, and perceived playfulness, impacted attitudes toward using
Web sites for reservations. Also, it was found that attitudes impacted respondents’ intentions
to use these sites for future reservations. Therefore, this extended TAM framework is valid in
the hotel industry and can be used to successfully predict travelers’ online behavior. However,
there were no significant differences between hotel-owned and intermediary Web sites in
their Web site features. In conclusion, it appeared that travelers preferred to use intermediary Web sites because they were perceived as superior to hotel-owned Web sites in their search for the best rate online. Therefore, it is suitable to observe that respondents showed stronger intentions to return to intermediary rather than hotel-owned Web sites.

5.2 Limitations of the study

The results of this study should be interpreted with caution for the following reasons: First, this study used a student sample with limited experience with online reservations. Perhaps conducting the study with a more diverse sample would result in different findings in the relationships among experience and the TAM constructs. Second, this study did not measure the change of respondents' perceptions over time. All measurements were taken at a single point in time. Perhaps a longitudinal study would be encouraged to conduct to measure the changes in travelers' perceptions and online behavior and would help understand the effects of age, income, and other demographic status on attitudes and intention to use Web sites for reservations. And, finally, this study offered only a limited number of reservation Web sites to visit. Although these Web sites were selected based on their popularity, more reservation Web sites should be evaluated to increase generalizability of features of hotel-owned Web sites and intermediary Web sites.

5.3 Implications and directions for further research

Findings of this study provide following implications for both researchers in this area and industry practitioners to enhance online customers' experience as well as generate more online transactions based on their preferred online behavior.
First, this study attempted to identify major factors that affect reservation-making decisions on the Internet. The extension of TAM to online reservation behavior was proven to be feasible, and this study provided a clear understanding of how the traditional TAM model should be adapted to the specifics of the industry. In addition, more attributes such as room rate, hotel stay experience, and brand loyalty should be included in the framework to better understand customers’ online reservation behavior.

Second, this study provides industry practitioners with online business strategies for hotel companies. To take advantage of the travelers’ preference of using the Internet as a reservation medium, the hotel companies should focus on:

- **Offering Web sites that are efficient, fast and content-rich.** As demonstrated by this study, travelers seemed to agree that Web site characteristics such as efficiency, speed, and detailed information about the hotel enhance their attitudes and intentions to use reservation Web sites.

- **Providing extra security information.** One of the major drawbacks of online reservations is security. It is always a good idea to enhance security features and convince travelers that the sites are entirely secure. It would be strategically advantageous for hotel companies to enhance travelers’ perceptions of security when making reservations on hotel-owned Web sites by providing them with certified security functions (e.g., Better Business Bureau certification, etc.).

- **Increasing user-friendliness of reservation Web sites.** One of the most important antecedents of attitudes toward using reservation Web sites was perceived ease of use. This study showed that perceived ease of use can also have a significant impact on travelers’ perceived usefulness and perceived playfulness. Therefore, hotel companies
should focus on building Web sites that are user-friendly and allow travelers to learn how to operate them easily.

- **Increasing playfulness of Web sites.** This study found that perceived playfulness had a significant impact on attitudes and intentions to use reservation Web sites. Therefore, hotel companies should focus on creating not only features that allow travelers to learn how to use the Web sites fast, but also features that are fun, entertaining, and allow travelers to emerge in the reservation experience deeply and ignore their immediate environment.

Third, this study also provides industry practitioners with online business strategies for intermediary companies. To capitalize on today’s preference of travelers to use intermediary distribution channels, intermediary companies should concentrate on:

- **Increasing security of their Web sites.** One of the most critical concerns for travelers is security. This is why the intermediary companies should focus on making their Web sites totally secure and communicating these security features to the travelers. This would enhance the usefulness of intermediary Web sites, with an impact on attitudes and intentions to use these Web sites in the future.

- **Capitalizing on travelers’ prior experience with intermediary Web sites.** Although experience with reservation Web sites played only a small role in enhancing travelers’ perceptions as well as their attitudes and intentions to use reservation Web sites, intermediary companies could enhance travelers’ experience by giving incentives for repeat visitation (such as discounts, bonus points, etc.). Although some intermediary Web sites (i.e., Expedia.com and Travelocity.com) are moving in that direction by creating
advertising that would eventually stimulate emotional attachment to the brand, there is much to be done in this direction by all intermediary companies.

- Continuing to provide rate comparisons and links to support service providers. A feature often mentioned by respondents was the possibility to compare rates across multiple hotels. In addition, it was found that side-by-side hotel comparisons would enhance traveler visitation of intermediary Web sites.
REFERENCES


APPENDICES
DATE: March 25, 2005
TO: Cristian Morosan
FROM: Human Subject Research Compliance Office
RE: IRB ID #05-107

STUDY REVIEW DATE: March 25, 2005

The Institutional Review Board has reviewed the project, "Understanding travelers' booking behavior on the Internet" requirements of the human subject protections regulations as described in 45 CFR 46.101(b). The applicable exemption category is provided below for your information. Please note that you must submit all research involving human participants for review by the IRB. Only the IRB may make the determination of exemption, even if you conduct a study in the future that is exactly like this study.

The IRB determination of exemption means that this project does not need to meet the requirements from the Department of Health and Human Service (DHHS) regulations for the protection of human subjects, unless required by the IRB. We do, however, urge you to protect the rights of your participants in the same ways that you would if your project was required to follow the regulations. This includes providing relevant information about the research to the participants.

Because your project is exempt, you do not need to submit an application for continuing review. However, you must carry out the research as proposed in the IRB application, including obtaining and documenting (signed) informed consent if you have stated in your application that you will do so or required by the IRB.

Any modification of this research must be submitted to the IRB on a Continuation and/or Modification form, prior to making any changes, to determine if the project still meets the Federal criteria for exemption. If it is determined that exemption is no longer warranted, then an IRB proposal will need to be submitted and approved before proceeding with data collection.

cc: AESHM
Miyoung Jeong

ORC 04-21-04
Applicable exemption category(s):

(1) Research conducted in established or commonly accepted educational settings, involving normal educational practices, such as (i) research on regular and special education instructional strategies, or (ii) research on the effectiveness of or the comparison among instructional techniques, curricula, or classroom management methods.

(2) Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior, unless: (i) information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human subjects can be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects; and (ii) any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation.

(3) Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior that is not exempt under paragraph (b)(2) of this section, if: (i) the human subjects are elected or appointed public officials or candidates for public office; or (ii) Federal statute(s) require(s) without exception that the confidentiality of the personally identifiable information will be maintained throughout the research and thereafter.

(4) Research involving the collection or study of existing data, documents, records, pathological specimens, or diagnostic specimens, if these sources are publicly available or if the information is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that subjects cannot be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects.

(5) Research and demonstration projects which are conducted by or subject to the approval of Department or Agency heads, and which are designed to study, evaluate, or otherwise examine: (i) Public benefit or service programs; (ii) procedures for obtaining benefits or services under those programs; (iii) possible changes in or alternatives to those programs or procedures; or (iv) possible changes in methods or levels of payment for benefits or services under those programs.

(6) Taste and food quality evaluation and consumer acceptance studies, (i) if wholesome foods without additives are consumed or (ii) if a food is consumed that contains a food ingredient at or below the level and for a use found to be safe, or agricultural chemical or environmental contaminant at or below the level found to be safe, by the Food and Drug Administration or approved by the Environmental Protection Agency or the Food Safety and Inspection Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.
ISU NEW HUMAN SUBJECTS RESEARCH FORM

SECTION I: GENERAL INFORMATION

Principal Investigator (PI): Cristian Morosan
Phone: (515) 294-4635
Fax: (515) 294-6384

Degrees: Ph.D. Candidate
Correspondence Address: 7E MacKay Hall
Department: Apparel, Educational Studies, and Hospitality Management
Email Address: cristian@iastate.edu

Center/Institute: College: FCS
PI Level: Faculty Staff Postdoctoral Graduate Student Undergraduate Student

Title of Project: Understanding travelers' booking behavior on the Internet
Project Period (Include Start and End Date): 03/01/05 to 04/30/05

FOR STUDENT PROJECTS

Name of Major Professor/Supervising Faculty: Miyoung Jeong, Ph.D.
Phone: (515) 294-3038
Campus Address: 5 MacKay Hall
Department: Apparel, Educational Studies, and Hospitality Management
Email Address: mjeong@iastate.edu

Type of Project: (check all that apply)
[ ] Research [ ] Thesis [ ] Dissertation [ ] Class project
[ ] Independent Study (490, 590, Honor's project) [ ] Other. Please specify:

KEY PERSONNEL

List all members of the research team including the principal investigator, his/her degrees, their position at ISU (or other organization) and role on the project, their training and most recent date of their training if known. Please use additional space as necessary. For projects involving animals, please include the veterinary, animal caretakers and technical staff. For projects involving human subjects, please include anyone who will have contact with the subjects.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME &amp; DEGREE(S)</th>
<th>POSITION AT ISU &amp; ROLE/SPECIFIC DUTIES ON PROJECT</th>
<th>TRAINING &amp; DATE OF TRAINING</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. Cristian Morosan</td>
<td>PhD candidate, Dept. of Apparel, Educational Studies and Hospitality Management, Principal investigator</td>
<td>ISU Human Subject Training, 10/15/05</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Research Compliance 04/10/03
FUNDING INFORMATION

| If internally funded, please provide account number: |
| If externally funded, please provide funding source and account number: |
| If funding is pending please provide OSPA Record ID on GoldSheet: |
| Title on GoldSheet if Different Than Above: |
| Other: e.g., funding will be applied for later: |

SCIENTIFIC REVIEW

Although the compliance committees are not intended to conduct peer review of research proposals, the federal regulations include language such as “consistent with sound research design,” “rationale for involving animals or humans” and “scientifically valuable research,” which requires that the committees consider in their review the general scientific relevance of a research study. Proposals that do not meet these basic tests are not justifiable and cannot be approved. If a compliance review committee(s) has concerns about the scientific merit of a project and the project was not competitively funded by peer review or was funded by corporate sponsors, the project may be referred to a scientific review committee. The scientific review committee will be ad hoc and will consist of your ISU peers and outside experts as needed. If this situation arises, the PI will be contacted and given the option of agreeing that a consultant may be contacted or withdrawing the proposal from consideration.

☐ Yes ☐ No Has or will this project receive peer review?

If the answer is “yes,” please indicate who did or will conduct the review:

If a review was conducted, please indicate the outcome of the review:

NOTE: RESPONSE CELLS WILL EXPAND AS YOU TYPE AND PROVIDE SUFFICIENT SPACE FOR YOUR RESPONSE.

COLLECTION OR RECEIPT OF SAMPLES

Will you be: (Please check all that apply.)

☐ Yes ☐ No Receiving samples from outside of ISU? See examples below.
☐ Yes ☐ No Sending samples outside of ISU? See examples below.

Examples include: genetically modified organisms, body fluids, tissue samples, blood samples, pathogens.

If you will be receiving samples from or sending samples outside of ISU, please identify the name of the outside organization(s) and the identity of the samples you will be sending or receiving outside of ISU:

Please note that some samples may require a USDA Animal Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) permit, a USPHS Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Import Permit for Etiologic Agents, a Registration for Select Agents, High Consequence Livestock Pathogens and Toxins or Listed Plant Pathogens, or a Material Transfer Agreement (MTA) (http://www.els.illinois.edu/mta/shipping.htm).
☐ Yes  ☒ No  Do you or any member of your research team have an actual or potential conflict of interest?
☐ Yes  ☐ No  If yes, have the appropriate disclosure form(s) been completed?

SIGNATURES

[Signature]
Date: 02/22/05

[Signature]
Date: 03/15/05

PLEASE NOTE: Any changes to an approved protocol must be submitted to the appropriate committee(s) before the changes may be implemented. Please proceed to SECTION II.

SECTION II: ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH AND SAFETY INFORMATION

☐ Yes  ☒ No  Does this project involve human cell or tissue cultures (primary OR immortalized), or human blood components, body fluids or tissues? If the answer is “no”, please proceed to SECTION III: APPLICATION FOR IRB APPROVAL. If the answer is “yes”, please proceed to Part A: Human Cell Lines.

PART A: HUMAN CELL LINES

☐ Yes  ☒ No  Does this project involve human cell or tissue cultures (primary OR immortalized cell lines/strains) that have been documented to be free of bloodborne pathogens? If the answer is “yes,” please attach copies of the documentation. If the answer is “no,” please answer question 1 below.

1) Please list the specific cell lines/strains to be used, their source and description of use.

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<th>CELL LINE</th>
<th>SOURCE</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION OF USE</th>
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2) Please refer to the ISU “Bloodborne Pathogens Manual,” which contains the requirements of the OSHA Bloodborne Pathogens Standard. Please list the specific precautions to be followed for this project below (e.g., retractable needles used for blood draws):

[Precautions listed here]

Anyone working with human cell lines/strains that have not been documented to be free of bloodborne pathogens is required to have Bloodborne Pathogen Training annually. Current Bloodborne Pathogen Training dates must be listed in Section I for all Key Personnel. Please contact Environmental Health and Safety (294-5359) if you need to sign up for training and/or to get a copy of the Bloodborne Pathogens Manual (http://www.els.lastate.edu/hs/bbp.htm).

PART B: HUMAN BLOOD COMPONENTS, BODY FLUIDS OR TISSUES

☐ Yes  ☒ No  Does this project involve human blood components, body fluids or tissues? If “yes”, please answer all of the questions in the “Human Blood Components, Body Fluids or Tissues” section.

1) Please list the specific human substances used, their source, amount and description of use.

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<th>SUBSTANCE</th>
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<th>AMOUNT</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION OF USE</th>
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[Substances listed here]

Research Compliance 04/10/03
Checklist for Attachments

The following are attached (please check ones that are applicable):

☐ A copy of the informed consent document OR ☐ Letter of information with elements of consent to subjects
☐ A copy of the assent form if minors will be enrolled
☐ Letter of approval from cooperating organizations or institutions allowing you to conduct research at their facility.
☐ Data-gathering instruments (including surveys)
☐ Recruitment fliers or any other documents the subjects will see

Two sets of materials should be submitted for each project—the original signed copy of the application form, one copy and two sets of accompanying materials. Federal regulations require that one copy of the grant application or proposal must be submitted for comparison.

FOR IRB USE ONLY:

Initial action by the Institutional Review Board (IRB):

☐ Project approved. Date: 3/25/05 05-107
☐ Pending further review. Date: 
☐ Project not approved. Date: 

Follow-up action by the IRB:

Research Compliance 04/10/03
The reassessment of the project, "Hotel guests' reservation behavior in two online distribution channels" during the review, has been declared exempt from Federal regulations as described in 45 CFR 46.101(b)(2).

To be in compliance with ISU's Federal Wide Assurance through the Office of Human Research Protections (OHRP) all projects involving human subjects, must be reviewed by the Institutional Review Board (IRB). Only the IRB may determine if the project must follow the requirements of 45 CFR 46 or is exempt from the requirements specified in this law. Therefore, all human subject projects must be submitted and reviewed by the IRB.

Because this project is exempt it does not require further IRB review and is exempt from the Department of Health and Human Service (DHHS) regulations for the protection of human subjects.

We do, however, urge you to protect the rights of your participants in the same ways that you would if IRB approval were required. This includes providing relevant information about the research to the participants.

Any modification of this research should be submitted to the IRB on a Continuation and/or Modification form to determine if the project still meets the Federal criteria for exemption. If it is determined that exemption is no longer warranted, then an IRB proposal will need to be submitted and approved before proceeding with data collection.

cc: AESHM
   Miyoung Jeong
(1) Research conducted in established or commonly accepted educational settings, involving normal educational practices, such as (i) research on regular and special education instructional strategies, or (ii) research on the effectiveness of or the comparison among instructional techniques, curricula, or classroom management methods.

(2) Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior, unless: (i) information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human subjects can be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects; and (ii) any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability; or reputation.

(3) Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior that is not exempt under paragraph (b)(2) of this section, if: (i) the human subjects are elected or appointed public officials or candidates for public office; or (ii) Federal statute(s) require(s) without exception that the confidentiality of the personally identifiable information will be maintained throughout the research and thereafter.

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(6) Taste and food quality evaluation and consumer acceptance studies, (i) if wholesome foods without additives are consumed or (ii) if a food is consumed that contains a food ingredient at or below the level and for a use found to be safe, or agricultural chemical or environmental contaminant at or below the level found to be safe, by the Food and Drug Administration or approved by the Environmental Protection Agency or the Food Safety and Inspection Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.
Appendix B1 – Recruitment email message / hotel subsample

Dear Respondent,

Thank you for your participation in this research project. The purpose of this project is to better understand travelers' use of hotel room reservation Web sites as well as their reservation behavior. It will take only a few minutes to complete the questionnaire. Your participation in this study is voluntary and all the information that you provide will be kept confidential.

Please click on the link below to access the survey:
http://www.fcs.iastate.edu/classweb/Surveys/Morosan/ic_h.htm

As a token of appreciation for your participation in the study, your name will be entered in a drawing for four $50 gift certificates at Target. Winning students will be notified by email.

By clicking on the link above, you will be directed to the Informed Consent page. In order for your response to be validated, please complete and submit the actual survey. The survey is completed only when you are directed to the Confirmation page.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us at the coordinates below.

Cristian Morosan
Ph.D. Candidate
Iowa State University
Foodservice and Lodging Management
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Ames, IA 50010
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cristian@iastate.edu

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Foodservice and Lodging Management
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Phone: (515) 294-3038
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If you have any questions about the rights of research subjects or research-related injury, please contact Ginny Austin Eason, IRB Administrator, (515) 294-4566, austingr@iastate.edu, or Diane Ament, Research Compliance Officer (515) 294-3115, dament@iastate.edu.

Again, thank you for your participation.

Sincerely,

Cristian Morosan
INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENT

TITLE OF STUDY: Hotel guests’ reservation behavior in two online distribution channels

INVESTIGATORS: Cristian Morosan and Miyoung Jeong, Ph.D.

This is a research study. Please decide if you would like to participate. Please feel free to ask questions at any time.

If you wish to participate, read through the following material, enter your name, student classification, and date into the data entry boxes below, then press the SUBMIT button. The online survey will then be displayed.

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is to investigate hotel guests’ reservation behavior on the Internet. You are being invited to participate in this study because you are a potential guest who can reserve rooms on the Internet.

DESCRIPTION OF PROCEDURES

If you agree to participate in this study, your participation will last for about 15-20 minutes and will involve completing an online survey. If you agree to participate you will complete a survey concerning attributes of reservation Web sites, your attitudes toward these Web sites, and your intentions to make hotel room reservations on these Web sites. By clicking on the SUBMIT button below you will be redirected to the Web site where you can complete the survey and submit it. You may skip any question that you do not wish to answer or that makes you feel uncomfortable.

RISKS

There are no foreseeable risks at this time from participating in this study.

BENEFITS

If you decide to participate in this study there may be no direct benefit to you. It is believed that the study will present a clear understanding of what makes guests use hotel reservations Web sites. This study will investigate what Web site attributes have the greatest impact on the guests’ decision to make online reservations. Some characteristics might have more weight for guests when making a reservation decision. Therefore, both hotel companies and intermediaries can improve their Web sites based on the characteristics perceived as important by guests. By using such customer-focused strategies, hotel and intermediary companies could create very efficient Web sites, on which one could find quickly and effortlessly everything that they need to make their best reservation decision. Such customer-oriented Web sites would improve not only the reservation process for any potential guest to encourage potential travelers to use the hotel-owned Web sites – the cheapest hotel distribution channels – in order to make travel more affordable.

COSTS AND COMPENSATION

You will not have any costs from participating in this. As a token of appreciation for your participation in the study, your name will be entered in a drawing for four $50 gift certificates at Target. Winning students will be notified by email.
PARTICIPANT RIGHTS

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary and you may refuse to participate or leave the study at any time. If you decide to not participate in the study or leave the study early, it will not result in any penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Records identifying participants will be kept confidential to the extent permitted by applicable laws and regulations and will not be made publicly available. However, federal government regulatory agencies and the Institutional Review Board (a committee that reviews and approves human subject research studies) may inspect and/or copy your records for quality assurance and data analysis. These records may contain private information.

To ensure confidentiality no identifiers will be kept with the data. The people who will have access to the study records are this researcher, his major professor, and a statistician who may help out in the analysis of the data. The records will be kept confidential. Research will be placed in locked filing cabinet and materials on computer and disks will be protected using passwords. The data will be retained for a maximum of 2 years before erasure or destruction. If the results are published, your identity will remain confidential.

QUESTIONS OR PROBLEMS

For further information about the study please feel free to contact us.

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SUBJECT SIGNATURE

By typing your name in the entry boxes below then pressing the SUBMIT button, you indicate that you voluntarily agree to participate in this study, that the study has been explained to you, that you have been given the time to read the document and that your questions have been satisfactorily answered.

First name: 

Last name: 

Academic classification: - Select one -

Today's date: 

Submit Reset
Appendix B3 – Survey Web page / hotel subsample

IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY
Foodservice and Lodging Management

Travelers' hotel reservation behavior in two online distribution channels

Dear Respondent:

Thank you for your participation in this research project. The purpose of this project is to better understand travelers' hotel reservation behavior on the Internet. It will take only a few minutes to complete the questionnaire. Your participation in this study is voluntary and all the information that you provide will be kept confidential.

Suppose that you have saved money to take a vacation in Orlando, Florida over the upcoming summer break. You are planning to make an online room reservation at one of the following hotels. Please click on the hotel to browse its Web site and make a room reservation. After browsing the Web site, please complete the questionnaire and submit your responses.

- Best Western Hotel
- Holiday Inn Hotel
- Comfort Inn
- Marriott Hotel
- Sheraton Hotel

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact us.

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Please indicate your agreement/disagreement with the statements below by selecting the option that best describes your opinion.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. This Web site improves my task of making a reservation.
2. This Web site enables me to make a reservation quickly.
3. This Web site is secure for making a reservation.
4. This Web site has customizable features to make a reservation (i.e., my preferences, my trips, my itineraries, etc.)
5. This Web site has links to other travel-related services (i.e., restaurants, car...
6. This Web site has detailed information about the hotel (i.e., room amenities, virtual tours, distance to attractions, maps, driving directions, etc.).

7. This Web site has detailed information about the city of Orlando (i.e., attractions, calendars of events, transportation, dining, recreation, etc.).

8. Overall, this Web site is useful for making a reservation.

9. This Web site is easy to navigate for making a reservation.

10. This Web site is user-friendly to browse when making a reservation.

11. The Web site has no pop-up features so that I could focus on making a reservation.

12. Overall, this Web site is easy to use.

13. This Web site is entertaining to browse.


15. I was so excited to browse this Web site for making a reservation that I was not aware of the time that had elapsed.

16. I was so excited to browse this Web site for making a reservation that I was not aware of distracting noises.

17. My experience with this Web site is delightful.

18. Overall, this Web site is fun.

19. Using this Web site to make a reservation is: bad ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ good.

20. Using this Web site to make a reservation is: worthless ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ valuable.

21. Using this Web site to make a reservation is: foolish ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ wise.

22. Using this Web site to make a reservation is: undesirable ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ desirable.

23. Overall, using this Web site to make a reservation is: a bad idea ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ a good idea.

24. I will make more reservations on this Web site.

25. I will bookmark this Web site for later use.

26. When I make a reservation online, this is the first site I will visit.

27. I will visit this Web site again.

28. I will recommend this Web site to others.

29. What would make you come back to this Web site for future reservations?

30. Number of online room reservations that I made in year of 2004: ☐ less than 5 ☐ 6-10 ☐ 10 or more.

31. Average hours using the Internet daily in 2004: ☐ less than 4 ☐ 5-10 ☐ 10 or more.

32. Overall, my experience with online reservations is: ☐ Limited ☐ Moderate ☐ Extensive.

33. I have visited this Web site before: ☐ Yes ☐ No.
34. Age: [ ] Younger than 18  [ ] 19-21  [ ] 22-25  [ ] 26 or older

35. Gender: [ ] Male [ ] Female

36. Major: [ ]

37. Academic classification: [ ] Freshman [ ] Sophomore [ ] Junior [ ] Senior [ ] Graduate [ ] Other

Your comments: 

Submit | Reset
Appendix C1 – Recruitment email message / intermediary subsample

Dear Respondent,

Thank you for your participation in this research project. The purpose of this project is to better understand travelers' use of hotel room reservation Web sites as well as their reservation behavior. It will take only a few minutes to complete the questionnaire. Your participation in this study is voluntary and all the information that you provide will be kept confidential.

Please click on the link below to access the survey:
http://www.fcs.iastate.edu/classweb/Surveys/Morosan/ic_i.htm

As a token of appreciation for your participation in the study, your name will be entered in a drawing for four $50 gift certificates at Target. Winning students will be notified by email.

By clicking on the link above, you will be directed to the Informed Consent page. In order for your response to be validated, please complete and submit the actual survey. The survey is completed only when you are directed to the Confirmation page.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us at the coordinates below.

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Cristian Morosan
INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENT

TITLE OF STUDY: Hotel guests' reservation behavior in two online distribution channels

INVESTIGATORS: Cristian Morosan and Miyoung Jeong, Ph.D.

This is a research study. Please decide if you would like to participate. Please feel free to ask questions at any time.

If you wish to participate, read through the following material, enter your name, student classification, and date into the data entry boxes below, then press the SUBMIT button. The online survey will then be displayed.

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is to investigate hotel guests' reservation behavior on the Internet. You are being invited to participate in this study because you are a potential guest who can reserve rooms on the Internet.

DESCRIPTION OF PROCEDURES

If you agree to participate in this study, your participation will last for about 15-20 minutes and will involve completing an online survey. If you agree to participate you will complete a survey concerning attributes of reservation Web sites, your attitudes toward these Web sites, and your intentions to make hotel room reservations on these Web sites. By clicking on the SUBMIT button below you will be redirected to the Web site where you can complete the survey and submit it. You may skip any question that you do not wish to answer or that makes you feel uncomfortable.

RISKS

There are no foreseeable risks at this time from participating in this study.

BENEFITS

If you decide to participate in this study there may be no direct benefit to you. It is believed that the study will present a clear understanding of what makes guests use hotel reservations Web sites. This study will investigate what Web site attributes have the greatest impact on the guests' decision to make online reservations. Some characteristics might have more weight for guests when making a reservation decision. Therefore, both hotel companies and intermediaries can improve their Web sites based on the characteristics perceived as important by guests. By using such customer-focused strategies, hotel and intermediary companies could create very efficient Web sites, on which one could find quickly and effortlessly everything that they need to make their best reservation decision. Such customer-oriented Web sites would improve not only the reservation process for any potential guest to encourage potential travelers to use the hotel-owned Web sites – the cheapest hotel distribution channels – in order to make travel more affordable.

COSTS AND COMPENSATION

You will not have any costs from participating in this. As a token of appreciation for your participation in the study, your name will be entered in a drawing for four $50 gift certificates at Target. Winning students will be notified by email.
PARTICIPANT RIGHTS

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CONFIDENTIALITY

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To ensure confidentiality no identifiers will be kept with the data. The people who will have access to the study records are this researcher, his major professor, and a statistician who may help out in the analysis of the data. The records will be kept confidential. Research will be placed in locked filing cabinet and materials on computer and disks will be protected using passwords. The data will be retained for a maximum of 2 years before erasure or destruction. If the results are published, your identity will remain confidential.

QUESTIONS OR PROBLEMS

For further information about the study please feel free to contact us.

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SUBJECT SIGNATURE

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First name: ___________________________________________
Last name: ___________________________________________
Academic classification: ________________________________
Today's date: ________________________________

Submit Reset
Appendix C3 – Survey Web page / intermediary subsample

IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY
Foodservice and Lodging Management

Travelers’ hotel reservation behavior in two online distribution channels

Dear Respondent:
Thank you for your participation in this research project. The purpose of this project is to better understand travelers’ hotel reservation behavior on the Internet. It will take only a few minutes to complete the questionnaire. Your participation in this study is voluntary and all the information that you provide will be kept confidential.

Suppose that you have saved money to take a vacation in Orlando, Florida over the upcoming summer break. You are planning to make an online room reservation at one of the following Web sites. Please click on the link to browse its Web site and make a room reservation. After browsing the Web site, please complete the questionnaire and submit your responses.

Expedia
Travelocity
Orbitz
Hotwire
Hotels

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact us.

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Please indicate your agreement/disagreement with the statements below by selecting the option that best describes your opinion.

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<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. This Web site improves my task of making a reservation.

2. This Web site enables me to make a reservation quickly.

3. This Web site is secure for making a reservation.

4. This Web site has customizable features to make a reservation (i.e., my preferences, my trips, my itineraries, etc.)
5. This Web site has links to other travel-related services (i.e., restaurants, car rentals, shuttle services, etc.)

6. This Web site has detailed information about the hotel (i.e., room amenities, virtual tours, distance to attractions, maps, driving directions, etc.).

7. This Web site has detailed information about the city of Orlando (i.e., attractions, calendars of events, transportation, dining, recreation, etc.).

8. Overall, this Web site is useful for making a reservation.

9. This Web site is easy to navigate for making a reservation.

10. This Web site is user-friendly to browse when making a reservation.

11. The Web site has no pop-up features so that I could focus on making a reservation.

12. Overall, this Web site is easy to use.

13. This Web site is entertaining to browse.


15. I was so excited to browse this Web site for making a reservation that I was not aware of the time that had elapsed.

16. I was so excited to browse this Web site for making a reservation that I was not aware of distracting noises.

17. My experience with this Web site is delightful.

18. Overall, this Web site is fun.

19. Using this Web site to make a reservation is:

20. Using this Web site to make a reservation is:

21. Using this Web site to make a reservation is:

22. Using this Web site to make a reservation is:

23. Overall, using this Web site to make a reservation is:

24. I will make more reservations on this Web site.

25. I will bookmark this Web site for later use.

26. When I make a reservation online, this is the first site I will visit.

27. I will visit this Web site again.

28. I will recommend this Web site to others.

29. What would make you come back to this Web site for future reservations?

30. Number of online room reservations that I made in year of 2004:

31. Average hours using the Internet daily in 2004:

32. Overall, my experience with online reservations is:

33. I have visited this Web site before:

34. Age: □ Younger than 18 □ 19-21 □ 22-25 □ 26 or older

35. Gender: □ Male □ Female

36. Major: ____________________________

37. Academic classification: □ Freshman □ Sophomore □ Junior □ Senior □ Graduate □ Other

Your comments:

Submit Reset
### Appendix D1 – Comments about the reservation experience – hotel subsample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comments</th>
<th>Academic classification</th>
<th>Major</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Although going to these websites is helpful, the rates for reservations</td>
<td>graduate student</td>
<td>Public Administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tend to be higher than if I went to other sites such as priceline.com.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I do not believe I have ever reserved a hotel room directly with the</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hotel but I have researched each time the rate differences.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As far as reservations go, this website was easy to use. However,</td>
<td>senior</td>
<td>Dietetics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>since the Sheraton is a national chain, it had links to places for all</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>over the US. Though this is helpful in some instances, I felt like I</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>was being re-routed and necessarily seeing information that would</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>be pertinent to the trip that I would be planning, because it just felt</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>like I kept getting re-directed places. This especially was the case</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>for the &quot;Specials and Packages&quot; and the &quot;Resorts and Vacations&quot; links.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good website to visit when you have a travel plan.</td>
<td>graduate student</td>
<td>Chemistry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holiday Inn is a rip off. I could find a nice hostel with friendlier</td>
<td>senior</td>
<td>Spanish and French</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>people in the selected country for less money by far. Not to mention,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>my trip would be 100 times more memorable.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I actually just made a reservation for Orlando 2 days ago using the</td>
<td>junior</td>
<td>Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holiday Inn site that was shown on in the survey. Using the internet</td>
<td>graduate student</td>
<td>Accounting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>saved me $10 per night.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I always visit different website to compare the price of hotel I want</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to stay. Sometimes I found it is cheaper to book with a travel agency</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>than book with the hotel directly.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am hesitant with putting my credit card on-line. It was nice to see</td>
<td>sophomore</td>
<td>Psychology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>all of the different options you have to choose from. I think if I</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>needed to book a room I would look at the website first and figure out</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>what room and amenities I want and then call to make a reservation.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am planning on taking a trip in August. I will use this site because</td>
<td>sophomore</td>
<td>Physics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>it is very easy to navigate.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am skeptical of web sites that promise the &quot;Best deal&quot; for something</td>
<td>senior</td>
<td>Computer Science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(car insurance, hotel reservations, and airline tickets) because they</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>quite often are MORE expensive because you are paying for the</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>convenience of doing everything online. I commonly use sites like this</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>one to find the addresses and phone numbers for hotels that I then</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>call myself to get a better deal.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I browsed the Marriott website for this survey. I was very glad that</td>
<td>senior</td>
<td>Psychology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>there were no garish advertisements on the site that make noise or</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>distract me (I would have immediately gone to another site if that</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>happened).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I do not feel safe purchasing anything over the internet. Too many</td>
<td>senior</td>
<td>Dietetics major and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>problems with fraud and stealing can occur. I would much rather talk</td>
<td></td>
<td>Psychology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to someone over the phone.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I do not make reservations to hotels or airports online or anything</td>
<td>sophomore</td>
<td>Sociology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>else that requires giving such information over an internet connection.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don't like it when a site requests to put a cookie on my computer.</td>
<td>junior</td>
<td>Physics &amp; Political Science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Western's site did this. If they absolutely need to, they need to</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explain what it is required for.</td>
<td>Senior</td>
<td>Family and Consumer Sciences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don't like making reservations online...for the simple fact that you have to give a credit card # and I like to have people to answer my questions right away.</td>
<td>Senior</td>
<td>Political Science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don't trust homepages because they rarely have reasonable rates, since they figure, if you're there, you must already have an interest in the rooms. Thus, they're often subject to price discrimination.</td>
<td>Junior</td>
<td>MBA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don't use specific hotel websites but rather search for the cheapest room available for the area I'm going to visit.</td>
<td>Graduate</td>
<td>MBA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I enjoyed how colorful and appealing the site was when I was searching through it. I could have stayed much longer browsing. Easy and fast to use!</td>
<td>Junior</td>
<td>Dietetics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I enjoyed the website and if I had more money I might actually make real reservations there and stay there. Overall I thought it showed what the hotel had to offer and was a very enjoyable experience to check it out.</td>
<td>Junior</td>
<td>Dietetics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel more comfortable making a reservation over the phone than online.</td>
<td>Senior</td>
<td>Chemistry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I find websites such as these, whether if be for a B&amp;B, a hostel, or a hotel are very helpful and can give you a peak into what to expect once you do arrive in the destination, online reservations are truly a part of my life.</td>
<td>Junior</td>
<td>Psychology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I generally go first to websites such as orbitz, hotels.com, or other sites that find low rates first, then use the information gathered to go directly to the hotel chain to make reservations.</td>
<td>Graduate</td>
<td>MBA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I generally use broad websites such as travelocity or orbitz</td>
<td>Senior</td>
<td>Business Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have always had favorable experiences in the three times I have made online reservations.</td>
<td>Senior</td>
<td>Marketing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have found that reservations online are less expensive rather than calling in.</td>
<td>Senior</td>
<td>Finance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have never made an online hotel reservation so I was not experienced at all. After looking at all these websites I realized how easy and fast it would be to make an online reservation. In the future I would seriously consider going online to make a reservation.</td>
<td>Senior</td>
<td>Dietetics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have not booked with any of these hotels before. They didn't seem easy to navigate and I am still more comfortable actually talking to a real person, so that I make sure I understand all of the underlying obligations and rules. I tend to skim and miss things if I read.</td>
<td>Senior</td>
<td>Marketing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have not used a website to make reservations before but it seems just as easy as calling and talking to a person.</td>
<td>Freshman</td>
<td>Business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have traveled quite extensively throughout Europe and have gotten very good at using online reservations. They are much more helpful when it is expensive to call for reservations and it's typically very easy to change your reservation online too. So, I believe this is especially helpful for people planning trips &quot;on a whim&quot; and for those out of state and out of the country.</td>
<td>Junior</td>
<td>CHFS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have used online reservation services before, such as travelworm and hotwire. They are much easier and bring up more results versus the individual site. This site I visited was extremely difficult and frustrating to navigate through.</td>
<td>Junior</td>
<td>CHFS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have used other web motel reservation web sites and find that</td>
<td>Senior</td>
<td>Accounting</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
they are better to use than a search engine like Orbitz or Expedia, also they don't charge surcharges

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I hope to take more trips so that I can use the website.</th>
<th>senior</th>
<th>Communications Studies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I like the Sheraton Hotel, so it was interesting to look at the site and see what I can do in the future.</td>
<td>freshman</td>
<td>Psychology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I like the website to obtain information, but really prefer to talk to a live representative in confirming my reservations with hotels. It's the comfort of hearing a voice instead of a click of the mouse.</td>
<td>senior</td>
<td>Business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I like to use multi-hotel websites for bookings to compare rates, expedia, orbitz etc.</td>
<td>senior</td>
<td>dietetics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I liked best western the best and the only thing I think would make it better would be discounted trips for people who continue to use their online service as a reward.</td>
<td>freshman</td>
<td>Business Undecided</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I liked the fact that you simply put in your dates and it automatically checks the availability.</td>
<td>sophomore</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I normally don't make reservations online, but maybe I will now.</td>
<td>freshman</td>
<td>Child, Adult, and Family Srvcs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I prefer to use travel websites like: Travelocity, Expedia, or any of the other sites dedicated for that reason.</td>
<td>senior</td>
<td>Apparel merchandising</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I prefer sites that scan prices - i.e. Priceline, Hotwire.</td>
<td>graduate student</td>
<td>MBA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I prefer to make phone reservations. When I make online reservations, I'm always worried that the hotel may not have received my reservation or may forget to enter it into their system. I used to work at a hotel and this sometimes happens with online reservations.</td>
<td>senior</td>
<td>Philosophy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I prefer to use a website like expedia.com that will give me many choices and prices.</td>
<td>junior</td>
<td>Accounting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think all of these web site are user friendly and I will definitely go to them again next time I go on a trip</td>
<td>sophomore</td>
<td>Marketing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think this web site was very user-friendly.</td>
<td>junior</td>
<td>Finance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I thought that overall the Marriott site was very basic. There was a place for the reservations and a place for attractions, etc., but they were not really easy to get to from one page to the next. It would be a better site if when on the reservations page they mentioned what attractions were nearby each individual hotel that they offer in Orlando. The site was very plain and not really that interesting to look at.</td>
<td>junior</td>
<td>JLMC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I thought the site was pretty easy to use, I just don’t make online hotel reservations very frequently</td>
<td>freshman</td>
<td>Marketing/SPANISH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I thought this website was poorly designed and lacking in color/multimedia content.</td>
<td>sophomore</td>
<td>Management &amp; Logistics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I used the web page for the Marriott and it would have been better if you could see a virtual tour.</td>
<td>junior</td>
<td>Finance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I usually use a different motel/hotel to stay at and I have made reservations with that motel online several times before.</td>
<td>senior</td>
<td>Earth Science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I visited best western, not too bad!</td>
<td>graduate student</td>
<td>Biology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I wish the site had better deals on rooms. If it had prices closer to the prices you get on priceline or one of those sites then I would be more likely to get a hotel room with them.</td>
<td>junior</td>
<td>Dietetics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I work for Choice Hotels, so I have accessed this website many</td>
<td>senior</td>
<td>Business Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Major</td>
<td>Comment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James</td>
<td>Journalism</td>
<td>I worked for Marriott Hotels for almost 20 years. Although the idea of making a reservation online seems convenient, I know from personal experience, both as a hotel guest and a hotel employee, that it is best to call the hotel you wish to stay at directly, that way you will have a person from that property to refer to if there are any problems with the reservation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarah</td>
<td>Management Information Systems</td>
<td>I would have liked a virtual tour on all rooms, but that is not as important as the ease of use and the up-front pricing. To me, those are paramount.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alex</td>
<td>Biology</td>
<td>I would love to use internet to make the hotel reservation, if I trust the hotel and give out my credit number. I don't like to make the reservation online because I don't trust them with my credit card and other personal information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taylor</td>
<td>Com S and Cpre E</td>
<td>I would normally go to a site that lets me check several companies, like travelocity or something.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benjamin</td>
<td>HRI</td>
<td>I would rather use a website like priceline or hotels.com, just as easy but discounted price.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sophia</td>
<td>Religious Studies</td>
<td>I would rather visit a website that included more than one hotel like orbitz or travelocity so I can see the overall best rate. It takes too long to search all that out yourself because there are just too many hotels and too many options in the world. It can be really frustrating.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David</td>
<td>Marketing</td>
<td>I would use this website, but I don't often travel or make my own reservations. Also, I think websites are a great idea to make reservations. It is so much easier. If I ever needed to make one, I would use a website.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rachel</td>
<td>Apparel Design</td>
<td>I wouldn't specifically go to a website for a hotel reservation...I would examine all my options in my given destination. The ease of use of a website is important in my frustration factor when registering, but I believe the rate of the hotel and the availability of reservations, as well as how nice it is when I get there are more important.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emily</td>
<td>Theatre</td>
<td>If the website is descriptive and has lots of information and details posted about its room is very important. A website won't ensure that I return to the website and book a reservation in the hotel; having me as a repeat customer would have more to do with good service and reasonable rates.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michael</td>
<td>Transportation &amp; Logistics</td>
<td>It still seems more sensible to go to one of the Priceline or that sort of web site to get a more affordable reservation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emily</td>
<td>Finance</td>
<td>It was a very appealing website. I've done a lot of traveling and bought many rooms online. Though the company web sites are great for getting information on your room, the prices are nothing compared to priceline.com. If you're willing to not care what hotel you stay in as long as its a certain quality, priceline.com is by far the best choice. I've stayed in Marriott hotels for $37. You can't find that on marriott.com!!!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James</td>
<td>Transportation &amp; Logistics</td>
<td>My mom is a travel agent so I usually go through her. I am studying abroad in Spain and have traveled much throughout Europe and found that booking a room online works pretty well... but also that in most major cities it is just as easy to find a room or place to stay upon arrival. But I'm a student and I backpack around so I'm not too picky upon where I stay. my views are probably</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Different then others</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------</td>
<td>--</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On most of the sites, there seemed to be too many links. It was easy to navigate, but all of the links and options were somewhat distracting. I'm sure there are people who travel enough to make all the links about specials and packages worthwhile, but for me, all of those links for specials were pointless and distracting.</td>
<td>sophomore Marketing and Spanish</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over the website that I visited was satisfactory. I would probably be back and reserve my room again.</td>
<td>junior Marketing and International Bu</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall I liked this site, it was easy to use and navigate. I do however like to use priceline.com when I am making reservations because I can usually get a better rate and a nicer hotel for the money.</td>
<td>junior MIS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall the website was easy to navigate and would be very helpful if I were looking to make a reservation. I would look at this website as well as others to compare prices.</td>
<td>sophomore pre-business</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Price is the most important thing to me when I am making online reservations. I prefer to use sources like HotWire, Expedia or Orbitz to help find the lowest prices.</td>
<td>graduate student Journalism &amp; Mass Comm.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rates were good</td>
<td>senior Psychology</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes making a reservation directly with the hotel is better, finding better deals, and not paying nearly as much commission as you do to the other general websites.</td>
<td>senior Management and Int'l Business</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The internet is as easy if not easier to use than the telephone when making hotel reservations. There are also no &quot;holding&quot; periods that you would encounter over the phone. Everyone should try making online reservations.</td>
<td>senior Dietetics</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Marriott web-site needs a lot of help to make it user friendly and therefore detracts from the beautiful pictures.</td>
<td>senior Child and Family Services</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The only reason I would not use this website for reservations was because the room rates are twice as expensive as other discount sites.</td>
<td>senior MIS/Spanish</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The site asked for preferences but then showed all types of rooms available when looking at the rates. It would have been better to only show the rooms that met the criteria, so to avoid confusion when making a reservation. If no rooms met the criteria, displaying a message that indicates that no available rooms met the criteria and asks if the visitor would like to look at other possible rooms.</td>
<td>graduate student Chemistry</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The site was very well organized. I appreciated that they gave a percent number for each of the match options as well as price (both important aspects of hotel registration that can affect my choice). The site was appealing and professional.</td>
<td>freshman LAS Open Option</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The sites were presented well and professional. I would stay at one of these hotels in the future.</td>
<td>senior Management</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The website chosen did not work properly and not a single piece of hotel information was available. When trying to find a hotel a blank screen appears.</td>
<td>graduate student Sociology</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The website is fine, but I think I might be able to find lower prices elsewhere. Also, I don't have much need to make reservations at this time. Overall, though, the website was good.</td>
<td>senior HRIM</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The website was aesthetically pleasing. But I thought it had too many links to other areas. Maybe put it all in one area?</td>
<td>freshman Management</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The website was easy to use and met all the needs for this kind of task.</td>
<td>sophomore</td>
<td>Marketing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The website was fine. It was easy to navigate and fun to look at. It was detailed. However, I don't normally make a lot of on-line reservations for 1.) Security reasons and 2.) I like the personal interaction over the phone.</td>
<td>senior</td>
<td>Sociology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The website was very easy to use and helpful. I would probably use it to make a reservation.</td>
<td>freshman</td>
<td>Psychology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There was a section with travel offers and deals, but it was not as prominent on the site as expected. Also, when this portion was accessed, the deals were not that great and they didn't apply to me.</td>
<td>junior</td>
<td>Political Science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They had a lot of info about the city and different things that you could do at the hotel and in the city.</td>
<td>senior</td>
<td>Accounting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This was easy to use, Even for me, someone who has never made reservations online!</td>
<td>freshman</td>
<td>Dietetics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This was fun even though I do not travel much; it allowed me to learn how to navigate a site in case I do travel sometime in the near future.</td>
<td>junior</td>
<td>Psychology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This website followed the outline of that of Expedia (which I like to use and is very easy)</td>
<td>junior</td>
<td>Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This website made it hard to make a reservation, because when I clicked on the hotel that I wanted, it said that 'an error had occurred,' and that I would have to go back to the reservation page.</td>
<td>junior</td>
<td>MARKETING</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This website was so much easier to use compared to my past experiences with travel sites that guarantee a &quot;cheaper deal&quot; for rooms and airfare—those sites are difficult to navigate and difficult to interpret. This website was straight forward and easy to use.</td>
<td>senior</td>
<td>Dietetics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This website was well-designed. The fact that you can book your rooms on the intro part of the website makes it much easier to get the booking done quickly. The website upheld my previously held notions about the quality of the hotel chain.</td>
<td>junior</td>
<td>Journalism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Web site is O.K. but it is the brand (Marriott) that makes me to decide to use their hotel.</td>
<td>senior</td>
<td>marketing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Web site was easy to navigate and make reservations with. Lots of info about the city. Offered package deals, and had plenty of easily accessible customer service.</td>
<td>senior</td>
<td>Computer Science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Website is a good one. It would be easy to make a reservation for a vacation.</td>
<td>junior</td>
<td>Journalism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>website was providing unnecessary information such as hotel info when it's unavailable for indicated dates</td>
<td>graduate student</td>
<td>Computer Science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>websites do not have as much confirmation as a phone call</td>
<td>senior</td>
<td>psychology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What discourages people from making reservations online is that when you call in usually you get a better deal than if you would make them online.</td>
<td>junior</td>
<td>Political Science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whether or not I use online reservations again would depend on whether or not the reservation is fulfilled correctly when I arrive at the hotel.</td>
<td>junior</td>
<td>Liberal Studies</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Appendix D2 – Comments about the reservation experience – intermediary subsample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comments</th>
<th>Academic classification</th>
<th>Major</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>By using Hotels.com before, I was slightly tricked by the actually amenities offered by the hotel. Although, with the prices paid, I should have known they were talked up.</td>
<td>senior</td>
<td>Marketing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coloring was an issue...it wasn't as enhancing to the eye as it could have been.</td>
<td>senior</td>
<td>Advertising</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customizable options were a perk!</td>
<td>sophomore</td>
<td>Journalism and Mass Communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Even if I have made online reservations, I still am kind of afraid of using this system, for it seems to me that it is highly possible to be the victim of a fraud.</td>
<td>graduate student</td>
<td>chemistry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expedia is a great site that gives you an opportunity to take your time and really look into the hotels available such as: looking at pictures and reading details. But it also gives you a chance to find your hotel fast and easy if when you don't want to take the time to look over everything.</td>
<td>senior</td>
<td>Logistics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expedia was very straightforward and easy to use. While looking around I got a few ideas for places I might like to go in the future.</td>
<td>freshman</td>
<td>Psych/ PreHealth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generally I like to use the websites to compare different hotel rates preliminarily, but when it comes to making the reservation, I'll most likely go to the hotel's website because they are usually slightly cheaper.</td>
<td>graduate student</td>
<td>Chemistry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>have used this website before, very familiar, very useful, and rooms are exactly how you would expect</td>
<td>junior</td>
<td>Accounting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I almost never use the internet to make hotel reservations. I prefer to contact the hotel directly where I want to stay. By going directly through the hotel, I am assured of their cancellation policy so that no charges are applied if my trip gets cancelled.</td>
<td>senior</td>
<td>Music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am currently studying abroad and use Expedia to order all of my tickets; however, they will not ship paper tickets internationally, even for flights originating in international destinations. This has been a problem for me, and for this reason I will not be able to book a return flight through this web site.</td>
<td>junior</td>
<td>Mgmt/Mktg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am not real interested in booking reservations online. I would rather make them over the phone or through a travel agency.</td>
<td>junior</td>
<td>Finance/Marketing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I did not like using this web site</td>
<td>junior</td>
<td>Trans Log</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I do like the fact that the site has the hotels grouped by both price and stars.</td>
<td>graduate student</td>
<td>Statistics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I do not travel a lot now but plan to someday and I will definitely use these websites!</td>
<td>junior</td>
<td>Dietetics</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
I don't enjoy making reservations. It is just something that must be done from time to time. So, I am not excited to make reservations, and the only thing I care about is ease.

I don't feel comfortable making online reservations because I don't like to give my credit card information over the internet no matter how much the website tells me that it is secure enough to do so without worry. I also prefer calling the actual hotel to make reservations because in my experience, these websites that claim to be able to give a discount from the hotel's prices, in fact end up being more expensive than if I were to make a reservation by phone.

I don't really like booking reservations online. I don't like to give out credit card numbers over the internet and I also think that the website was kind of confusing. I would rather type in "travel info" on the state I am going to and call a hotel from home.

I enjoy making and planning my travel online. It makes the process easier and faster.

I found this website helpful and easy to use. I would definitely make a reservation through here.

I generally don't use the Internet to make reservations, because I usually just stay places on a whim.

I have always used Travelocity for my travel plans. I usually use it through Yahoo! though.

I have found this website to have been helpful to me in the past (orbitz) and intend to continue using it.

I have never had any problems with Expedia.com. I think it is a great resource to search for the best deal.

I have never tried to make a reservation before, but if I do someday I would highly consider using this website.

I have used all of the sites before, and enjoy using online reservations, I will never go to a travel agent (unless I'm forced to when I'm overseas and there is no Internet, (happened to me in Europe before).

I have used Expedia in the past and had great results, although, I have learned it isn't always the least expensive.

I have used sites to book reservations before, but I am not able to use the points cards that I have with the organizations. If I was able to use these points cards. I would make more reservations online.

I have used this site before and it worked well so I will continue using it.

I have used websites to reserve hotels, cars, and plane tickets. I find them very helpful, especially with finding hotels you might not otherwise know about.

I like Expedia, however, I only use it to find hotels in the area I'm going to visit. After I find a hotel I like, I search for the Web site of the hotel I like and then book it directly through the hotel. It always seems to be a little
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cheaper that way.</th>
<th>senior sociology</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I like the internet shopping either, because I'm such a computer warm. I think the skilled or usually used computer users are related to the internet ticket reservation things. Thanks!</td>
<td>senior Advertising</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I like the site a lot, but would like a side-by-side comparison of what other similar sites are charging for lodging.</td>
<td>junior Liberal Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I like the website and have used it before. It is entertaining and useful.</td>
<td>senior BLS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I like to get to the business of see what they have and for what price.</td>
<td>sophomore Fin/mgmt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I liked the overall layout and the easy to use point and click buttons. I would go back if my trip was just as I planned.</td>
<td>freshman Pre-Business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I liked the website, but I'm not sure how much I trust this website with credit card information. I am still pretty skeptical about putting that kind of information on any website.</td>
<td>senior Biochemistry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I love the ease of online shopping/planning.</td>
<td>senior Marketing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I make online reservations for work, and generally use Expedia. When I have had problems, their customer service staff is helpful and just a phone call away. I also sometimes compare the prices I find on Orbitz and on the hotel's webpage.</td>
<td>sophomore Business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I NEED TO MAKE RESERVATIONS FOR A CONFERENCE I AM ATTENDING THIS SUMMER AND I WILL BE USING ORBITZ TO DO THAT.</td>
<td>junior FCS EDUCATION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I normally use Orbitz for hotel reservations and find it relatively easy to use. Some of the online graphics can be somewhat distracting.</td>
<td>sophomore Business Marketing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I normally use Travelocity for my online reservations. I am so used to Travelocity that I was not very interested in Expedia. I assumption is that I have just grown comfortable in my tradition way of going about making online flight reservations.</td>
<td>sophomore Business Marketing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I often use websites like this to shop around for the best price.</td>
<td>graduate student Rhetoric and Professional Comm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I prefer to call the hotels myself and make a reservation. I think that it is easier to talk to someone over the phone because then questions get clarified and I can find out more about the area that I am going to. But as a preliminary step, I browse through the websites and write down hotels and their numbers and offers and then call.</td>
<td>graduate student sociology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I really don't go on many vacations, and I have never actually made room reservations online. I have, however, looked up information on hotels, but I normally call to talk to someone for my reservations.</td>
<td>sophomore Criminal Justice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I really enjoyed Expedia.com, it was a great resource for making reservations.</td>
<td>freshman Psychology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comment</td>
<td>Year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I really like Expedia and I will use it that when I plan trips, if only to see what kind of entertainment and such to do where I am going.</td>
<td>freshman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I really like using Web sites to make hotel reservations, in addition to other types of reservations (flights especially). I like how they show you the availability instantly and it's also an efficient way to shop around for the best deals. Also, it's very easy to use, and it provides other services in addition to just hotel lodging. I will always use Web sites to make reservations because it's much easier, you don't have to search for telephone numbers for a ton of hotels and you also aren't put on hold. Also, it's very convenient to surf online for hotels, you can do it whenever and wherever you want.</td>
<td>senior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think all the web sites for travel are cumbersome</td>
<td>senior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think that online reservations are very easy to do, I'm just not sure about using my credit card online. Otherwise these websites are great for finding hotels in certain areas with certain accommodations.</td>
<td>junior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think that orbitz is a great website, i used to book my spring break trip this year and plan on doing it next time i travel too.</td>
<td>sophomore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think the internet is a great way to make travel plans... it's much better than talking to someone over the phone!</td>
<td>senior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I use orbitz and travelocity to find room and air fares that are usually a lot cheaper than if I call the hotel directly.</td>
<td>senior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I used Expedia to make reservations in Plano Texas a couple of months ago and ended up saving $35 a night, and the hotel was even in a new and up-scale neighborhood.</td>
<td>senior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I usually use expedia and travelocity, but hotels.com is a nice site.</td>
<td>senior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I visited Expedia, and I liked the pop-up calendars for check in/check out dates, they'd be handy had I really been making a reservation.</td>
<td>senior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I work at a hotel and see the problems of making reservations over the internet so I probably will not make reservations over the internet. I will most likely call the hotel DIRECTLY.</td>
<td>senior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I work front desk at a hotel, and I think booking hotels online is a good idea. It not only saves time for the person booking the room, but it also gives me more time to attend to guests in the hotel rather than just answering the phone. The only thing with booking rooms online is that sometimes there can be a computer glitch, and the reservation doesn't come through. I always book my room online and then call the hotel to make sure everything is correct!</td>
<td>junior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would say that the website was convenient but certainly not a pleasurable experience. Really no entertainment value, just service.</td>
<td>graduate student</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In the past I've had very good luck with hotwire. The only thing that I don't like is that I don't know which hotel I get until after I've paid, and all sales are final. It's very annoying and undesirable when I feel like I have no control, when someone else is telling me what to do and not giving me any say.

It was annoying to have to click on every hotel in the list to see the customer ratings—I care about that more than I care about the number of stars it has. Also, it was unclear whether the "Expedia picks" were hotels that were rated highly or that paid to be picks. But it's really low prices that I care about in the real world.

It was easy and simple to use

I've used the internet to make a reservation one time and when we got to the hotel we didn't have a room reserved so I am leery about using the internet to make a hotel reservation. It possible that I would do it again though.

I've worked in this industry and making reservations online usually ends up costing more. Always check the hotel first for any deals or discounts...also, sometimes, reservations are lost when you use the web.

like i was saying i would use this site in the future more because of the marketing than anything else-i know what the site it, what it is used for, and most importantly i remember the name of the site

Online reservation makes travelling easier. It saves me time and money.

Online reservations are very helpful and convenient.

Orbitz has has positive word of mouth from people I know and this is another reason why I return to use their web site.

Orbitz is extremely easy to use!

Pop-up ads are almost certainly deal breakers. I like simple, clean sites too. This site (travelocity) had too much going on. Functionality was great though. The gnome is funny.

recently made reservations from this site for a trip to California later in the year and was real impressed with it, easy to navigate, price competition, etc.

should be made easier to use with more details

Since I have traveled before, I tend to have more confidence and better deals by going to the direct website of the airline company, and price comparing with the different airlines that way.

Site's interface is very user-friendly and easy to navigate.

Suggestions: I wish price comparisons would be shown for staying in nearby towns and for lower/higher star hotels. Also, the "5 star" rating system is not universal and confusing

The fear of saving a credit card number over the internet is still a reasonable one. I think the best characteristic of these sites is the ability to compare prices of numerous hotel chains in an area.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comment</th>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Major</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The reason why I visited this web site is recommendation of others</td>
<td>junior</td>
<td>HRIM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of friends and roommates.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The site I went to is one of my favorites and it is really good</td>
<td>junior</td>
<td>Political Science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>when you are familiar, for the most part, with online reservations.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It also finds cheap tickets, which is a plus.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The website definitely wants to make you take a vacation</td>
<td>sophomore</td>
<td>Psychology/Sociology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The website is helpful and easy to use. The initial reason</td>
<td>senior</td>
<td>Advertising</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I had gone to that site first is because of the ad tag line - it stuck</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in my head.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The website is very useful for many things.</td>
<td>sophomore</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The website was too busy &amp; unappealing. I didn't like how it looked.</td>
<td>senior</td>
<td>Psychology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There are a lot better sites with more options</td>
<td>sophomore</td>
<td>Marketing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There's a lot of clutter on these sights. Too much advertising.</td>
<td>sophomore</td>
<td>Communication Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There's no other way to go; I always book online.</td>
<td>junior</td>
<td>Finance and Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>These sites are great for making reservations, and it's nice</td>
<td>sophomore</td>
<td>MIS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>being able to select from so many to get the best deal at even the</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>same hotel. More discount codes would be appreciated, but I don't</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>want to have to sort through spam email just to get to the codes, so</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I'm pretty happy with my current situation.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This page seemed very similar to others that I have viewed. Although I</td>
<td>sophomore</td>
<td>Biology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>have never made a reservation through Travelocity I would not be</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>against using this site in the future.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This website provided a lot of results and good prices, but the</td>
<td>junior</td>
<td>Management Information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>results presented a lot of information at once and were a little</td>
<td></td>
<td>Systems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>difficult to sift through.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Used it for spring break, ended up 2 miles away from desired location.</td>
<td>sophomore</td>
<td>Psychology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using the web to make reservations is fast and convenient!</td>
<td>senior</td>
<td>dietetics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When I look to reserve a place, I first look at where I am</td>
<td>junior</td>
<td>Marketing, Int'l Business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>going and the attractions. Then I get on-line and look at places and</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>prices. Also, I factor is convenience and all. I think no site has</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ever given me a good &quot;virtual tour&quot; of the rooms, but I don't think</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>it is so important. I do compare many sites and promotions though.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whenever I make reservations I use the 1-800 numbers</td>
<td>junior</td>
<td>Dietetics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>for the hotels. I don't like using the internet, because I don't</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>like putting my credit card number on it.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>