Global Distribution Systems:

THE **ENGINES** BEHIND TRAVELER CHOICE

45,000
Daily Flights
Handled by the FAA

5,082
Total Public Airports
in the US

166,272
US Hotel
Businesses in 2023

400+
Worldwide
passenger airlines

5.29 M
Hotel rooms in the US
as of 2020
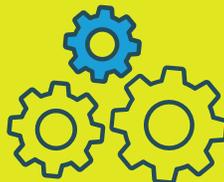
Global Distribution Systems (GDS)
sit at the center of the travel ecosystem,
working behind the scenes to enable
discovery and purchase of consumer and
business travel options.

GDS technology is the intelligence behind online travel sites, mobile apps, travel agents and a multitude of travel solutions that allow consumers to search for, compare and book among thousands of travel options.

2.9 M
Passengers Flying in and
out of US airports daily

You've probably heard an announcement like this while you were busy remembering where you stored your carry-on or checking the gate for your connecting flight. Travelers have a lot to keep track of, an entire world to explore and many decisions to make along the journey. That's where GDS systems come in, illuminating choices for travelers — without overwhelming them.

Innovating for Decades to Enable Discovery and Choice

Global Distribution Systems (GDS) have been innovating for decades to power consumer choice in the global travel and tourism industry. These worldwide reservation systems act as platforms connecting travel bookers and travel suppliers (e.g., airlines, hotels and car rental companies), promoting the price transparency and competition that allow travelers to choose the travel options that best meet their needs. Having real-time access to the travel supplier's price (fares and fees) and availability data allows travel agents and online booking engines to offer travelers a rich set of options, and helps airlines and other travel suppliers reach a global audience. Most importantly, GDSs make travel more competitive and accessible by allowing consumers to compare fares/fees between travel suppliers and scout the best deals.
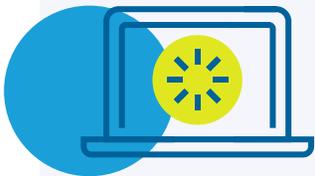
In a world without GDS systems or other aggregators, travelers would have to visit airline websites one by one, potentially spending hours looking for the best fares. With more than 400 worldwide passenger airlines in operation, the loss of comparison shopping would mean the loss of consumer choice.

Tackling Technology Today to Power Tomorrow

GDSs are committed to helping travelers and travel industry professionals leverage next-generation technology applications such as artificial intelligence (AI), machine learning and real-time data and analytics to make their travel experience better — from the onset.

In recent years some airline companies have moved away from the transparent pricing and comparison shopping that GDSs provide by choosing not to load and distribute all or some of their flight, fare and fee data through a GDS.

This not only harms GDS competitiveness with airline-owned methods of distribution, but also degrades GDS performance and ultimately rebounds to hurt the airlines' own customers.

When the airlines withhold information from GDSs, travel agents and online travel sites are not getting a complete picture — **and the consumer suffers.**

no results

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TRAVEL TECH
The Travel Technology Association