

Hotels Not Offering Free Wi-Fi Will Lose Out, DataArt Debate Hears

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Hotels not offering free Wi-Fi are at risk of losing customers, industry representatives told guests at a DataArt Question Time event.

Alex Gisbert, chief marketing officer for Lowcostbeds, said Wi-Fi was an essential for consumers looking to stay connected during their holiday.



He said hotels who charge for internet use would ultimately lose money, claiming that the industry should be taking full advantage of technology when interacting with consumers.

Gisbert said he recently advised a hotel owner to offer free Wi-Fi to attract more customers after he told him how much he was currently making from charging for internet use.

He said travel companies could also benefit from additional features such as downloadable maps and language translation add-ons to interact with customers after the booking has been made.

The panel consisted of Gisbert; Hugo Burge, chief executive of the Momondo Group; Stuart Nassos, chief operating officer of Totalstay; Paul Godman, industry manager for travel at Google; and Dmitry Bagrov, senior vice president of DataArt.

All agreed that the concept of the “always connected traveller” was reliant on constant access to the internet which was not yet a reality.

Issues discussed at the event included the high costs of data roaming, the importance of Wi-Fi, how companies interact with the trade and whether SEO was a fad.

They also discussed how connected a consumer wants to be with the travel company during their trip.

Hugo Burge, chief executive of the Momondo Group, said user-generated content was a highly important interaction tool, and his company received many reviews from consumers about where they had stayed.

He said the fact consumers could not be connected during their holidays “is a problem”, adding: “We say we are always connected but there is a lot of room for improvements. There are a lot of projects to make Wi-Fi more widely available.”

Asked what issues would still remain in three years time, Nassos said he believed the issues would remain the same but would involve different technologies.

Gisbert said he believed issues would be linked more to the challenges of personalisation than connection.