IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF TEXAS
FORT WORTH DIVISION

American Airlines, Inc., a Delaware corporation, Plaintiff, vs. Sabre, Inc., a Delaware corporation; Sabre Holdings Corporation, a Delaware corporation and Sabre Travel International Ltd., a foreign corporation, d/b/a Sabre Travel Network; Travelport Limited, a foreign corporation and Travelport, LP, a Delaware limited partnership, d/b/a Travelport; and Orbitz Worldwide, LLC, a Delaware limited liability company, d/b/a Orbitz; Defendants.	)	Civil Action No.: 4:11-cv-0244-Y

APPENDIX IN SUPPORT OF
AMERICAN AIRLINES INC.'S RESPONSE IN OPPOSITION TO
TRAVELPORT'S RULE 12(b)(6) MOTION TO DISMISS

American Airlines, Inc. respectfully files this Appendix in Support of its Response in Opposition to Travelport's Rule 12(b)(6) Motion to Dismiss.

Exhibit	App. Pages	Date	Description
1	1-49	11/8/10	Verified Complaint for Declaratory Judgment

DATED: July 18, 2011

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Yolanda Garcia

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CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I hereby certify that all counsel of record who are deemed to have consented to electronic service are being served with a copy of the foregoing document via the Court's CM/ECF system pursuant to the Court's Local Rule 5.1(d) this 18th day of July, 2011.

/s/ Robert S. Velevis
Robert S. Velevis

EXHIBIT 1

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF COOK COUNTY, ILLINOIS
COUNTY DEPARTMENT, CHANCERY DIVISION

TRAVELPORT, LP, a Delaware Limited Partnership, Plaintiff,	)	
v.	)	No.
AMERICAN AIRLINES, INC., a Delaware company, Defendant.	)	

VERIFIED COMPLAINT FOR DECLARATORY JUDGMENT

Travelport, LP, successor in interest to Galileo International, LLC ("Travelport" or "Plaintiff"), by its attorneys, Duane Morris LLP, for its declaratory judgment complaint against American Airlines, Inc. ("AA") states as follows:

I. NATURE OF ACTION

1. This case is about AA putting its corporate knee on the neck of one of Travelport's largest customers, Orbitz Worldwide ("Orbitz"), to force a result that violates AA's contract with Travelport. Specifically, AA is coercing Orbitz into changing its existing business model to one that AA believes will more thoroughly stuff AA's pockets. AA is engaging in these heavy handed and coercive tactics, which include its unilateral decision to terminate Orbitz's ability to book AA tickets, notwithstanding that: i) AA's termination would result in an egregious breach of many of AA's contractual obligations to Travelport; ii) AA's proposed termination would eliminate a distribution outlet for AA tickets through which consumers obtain transparent access to AA inventory thereby enabling them to make an informed travel choice by comparing AA products with other airline products; and iii) the distribution model AA wants to impose is inefficient, costly, anti-competitive and anti-consumer.

2. Travelport brings this declaratory judgment action against AA pursuant to 735 ILCS 5/2-701(a) because Travelport has a legal tangible interest in this matter and an actual controversy with AA. The actual controversy concerns whether AA can make good on its threat to discontinue Orbitz's ability to book AA tickets, and to prohibit access to AA's fares, pricing, availability, and other airline information, without breaching Travelport's contract rights. If AA terminates Orbitz, then AA will have breached its contract with Travelport, including by depriving Travelport's affiliates of full content, and thereby cause substantial harm to Travelport and to companies in which Travelport has a substantial pecuniary interest.

3. By this action, Travelport therefore seeks a declaratory judgment as to this existing dispute so that the Court can settle and fix the rights of the parties before AA initiates an irrevocable change in the position of the parties that will jeopardize the parties' respective claims of right.

II. PARTIES

4. Travelport, LP is a Delaware limited partnership formed under the laws of Delaware.

5. American Airlines, Inc. is a Delaware company which is authorized to do business in and has offices in Illinois. AA, one of the world's largest airlines, has one of its major hubs at O'Hare International Airport in Chicago, Illinois.

III. JURISDICTION AND VENUE

6. Jurisdiction is proper in Illinois under 735 ILCS §5/2-209 because AA and Travelport consented by contract to the personal jurisdiction of the Circuit Court of Cook County, Illinois. As separate and independent additional bases for jurisdiction, AA owns assets in Illinois, and conducts substantial business in Illinois through its agreement with Travelport and the operation and provision of airline services in and throughout Illinois.

7. Venue is proper in Cook County, Illinois under 735 ILCS §5/2-101 because AA consented by contract to venue in Cook County, Illinois, and Cook County, Illinois is the location in which some part of the transaction giving rise to this action occurred.

IV. FACTS

A. Travelport Provides Sophisticated And Highly Valued Travel Services That Are Dependent On Contracts That Guaranty Full Content

8. Travelport and its affiliated Travelport entities (collectively, "Travelport") own and operate computerized reservation systems ("CRSs") under the trademarks Galileo, Apollo and Worldspan. CRSs, which are also known as global distribution systems ("GDS"), enable online and offline travel agents, travel service providers, travel-related websites, and the general public to search for and/or book airline tickets, hotel rooms, rental cars, and associated products and services.

9. Travel agencies, travel service providers and consumers rely heavily on GDSs because the GDSs are integral to the users' ability to efficiently obtain the travel services they need at the cost they desire.

10. For its part, Travelport spends a tremendous amount of money on the sophisticated infrastructure and technology that is required to timely and accurately deliver its broad ranging and high value travel services on a massive scale. For example, Travelport has operations in 160 countries and has 1,300 IP professionals who help to process up to 1.6 billion messages per day. In 2009 Travelport processed 148 million tickets, serviced 60,000 travel agencies and its search engine processed 75 million searches per day.

11. In simplistic terms, Travelport's GDS acts as a clearing house that aggregates, processes, reformulates and makes available travel data. The GDS obtains data from travel providers like airlines, hotels and rental car companies. That data can then be accessed and

reviewed by travel agents, consumers and others who may ultimately choose to book desired travel through the GDS.

12. Given the nature of the services Travelport provides, it is critical to Travelport's success and competitiveness that it has full access to complete and up-to-date data and information from major airlines, like AA, including all of their air fares, flights, best seats, lowest fares, and promotions.

13. For that reason, Travelport enters into contracts with the major airlines ("Suppliers") that require the Suppliers to provide Travelport with full and complete access to each respective Supplier's content.

14. Travelport, through its predecessor in interest, Galileo International, L.L.C., entered into an agreement with AA on July 5, 2006 titled "Preferred Fares Amendment" pursuant to which Travelport obtained full content from AA (the "Full Content Agreement"). The Full Content Agreement was an Amendment to an earlier agreement between Travelport and AA called the Galileo International Global Airline Distribution Agreement ("GIGADA") which the parties executed on December 15, 1993.

15. The Full Content Agreement had an effective commencement date of September 1, 2006 and continues for a specific period unless terminated pursuant to its terms. As of the filing of this Verified Complaint, the Full Content Agreement remains in full force and effect and AA has no basis upon which to terminate it.

16. AA and Travelport each have copies of the Full Content Agreement, and each is familiar with its terms. Because the Full Content Agreement contains a confidentiality provision, Travelport has not attached a copy of it to this complaint. Further, the Full Content Agreement contains certain highly confidential and proprietary commercial and business

information of Travelport. The disclosure of that information to Travelport's competitors and others would be highly damaging to Travelport's business and otherwise severely prejudice its existing and future commercial operations. However, Travelport will make a copy of the Full Content Agreement available to the Court for an *in camera* inspection.

B. Travelport Has A Substantial Corporate, Ownership and Pecuniary Interest In Orbitz Worldwide

17. Travelport has a legal tangible interest in AA's performance of its obligations under the Full Content Agreement.

18. Travelport also has a legal tangible interest in Orbitz and its affiliates with whom Travelport has a variety of contracts, and in which Travelport entities have a substantial pecuniary interest.

19. By way of background, Orbitz is a publicly held company. Orbitz is a leading global online travel company that uses technology to enable leisure and business travelers to research, plan and book a broad range of travel products. Orbitz owns a portfolio of consumer brands that includes Orbitz, CheapTickets, ebookers, HotelClub, RatesToGo, the Away Network, and a corporate travel brand called Orbitz for Business.

20. Orbitz is a Travelport customer, makes substantial use of Travelport CRSs, and generates more airline travel revenues for Travelport than any other travel agent.

21. Along with being one of Travelport's biggest customers, Orbitz also has a substantial corporate relationship with Travelport. For example, a Travelport affiliated company owns 48% of Orbitz's stock.

22. Simply put, Travelport has a legal tangible interest in Orbitz because of the many contracts between them, and because what happens to Orbitz and its businesses is of great pecuniary importance to Travelport.

C. AA's Termination of Orbitz's Agreements

23. Orbitz recently filed an SEC Form 8-K (Termination of a Material Definitive Agreement). In the Form 8-K, Orbitz disclosed that AA notified Orbitz on November 1, 2010 that AA would be terminating as of December 1, 2010: i) Orbitz's Second Amended and Restated Airline Charter Associate Agreement; ii) Orbitz's Supplier Link Agreement; and iii) Orbitz's ability to ticket AA flights. Exhibit E.

24. This issue between Travelport and AA has been brewing for a substantial period of time. Indeed, for the last approximately two years, Travelport has been in discussions with AA to extend and/or renew the Full Content Agreement. Those discussions included terms that would guaranty the continued provision of full AA content to Travelport's affiliates and thousands of other travel agencies.

25. Under the current contracts, and in very broad terms, AA provides its travel content to Travelport, and consumers use Orbitz to conduct searches and book travel through Travelport. AA pays Travelport a small fee for the AA trips that are booked through Travelport. Travelport pays Orbitz a fee for the AA trips that Orbitz books through Travelport.

26. This highly efficient and pro-competitive model has been used successfully by airlines, GDSs, travel agencies and consumers for years.

27. AA desperately wants to change this model by eliminating GDSs, and ultimately online travel agencies, such that consumers search for and book travel directly with the carrier without the ability to comparison shop with full transparency of all available travel choices. Alternatively, AA would likely continue using Travelport, but even more drastically reduce the amount it pays Travelport for each booking (or even try to pay nothing at all).

28. Unfortunately, consumers suffer while AA plays its games because the model AA wants to employ is inefficient and costly (but highly lucrative for AA). Indeed, along with ultimately depriving consumers of the ability to make informed travel choices, the model will immediately increase costs and create inefficiencies by requiring the creation of new infrastructure to connect directly to each airline (rather than using a single GDS which allows access to hundreds of content providers though the one GDS portal).

D. Travelport Has A Substantial Legal Tangible Interest

29. Travelport's legal tangible interest in these issues is highly material as the damage by AA's conduct is significant and immediate.

30. AA's termination intentions forced Orbitz to make the public Form 8-K filing referenced above.

31. Not surprisingly, Orbitz's disclosure resulted in the immediate proliferation of high profile and highly prejudicial news articles that have appeared in the Wall Street Journal, Bloomberg, AP News and various other national news outlets. Group Exhibit F.

32. To get a sense of the tremendous damage that AA's improper actions have already caused, one need only look to an article that ran the highly prejudicial headline "AA Dumping Orbitz." *Id.*

33. In articles describing AA's termination, it was reported that Orbitz shares lost 18% ***in one day***. *Id.* Given the Travelport entities' 48% ownership interest in Orbitz, this decline had a direct, substantial and negative impact on Travelport. In dollars, that impact reflected an approximately $50 million loss in share value to Travelport. Additionally, AA's highly prejudicial actions have caused and will likely continue to cause Travelport significant additional business losses.

34. Travelport has a legal tangible interest in its contracts, and its revenue, business and good will (and in that of its largest customer Orbitz).

REQUEST FOR DECLARATORY JUDGMENT

35. Travelport repeats and realleges paragraphs 1-34 which are fully incorporated herein.

36. Travelport brings this request for declaratory judgment against AA pursuant to 735 ILCS § 5/2-701.

37. Travelport has performed all of its obligations under the Full Content Agreement.

38. The Full Content Agreement is a legally binding and enforceable contract that is still in effect.

39. Travelport has a legal tangible interest in the Full Content Agreement and in AA's full and complete performance of the terms of that agreement.

40. The Full Content Agreement was the result of lengthy negotiations with AA. The core of the parties' agreement was that Travelport would accept drastically reduced booking fees from AA in exchange for AA's commitment that, during the term of the Full Content Agreement, and notwithstanding AA's rights under any other agreement, AA would make its full content available to Travelport to enable Travelport to provide such full content to all of its travel agency customers and specifically to Travelport's affiliates such as Orbitz. Said another way, but for AA's commitment to the provision of full content and other commitments by AA relating to Travelport's affiliates, Travelport would not have provided AA with the deeply discounted fee schedule which AA continues to enjoy today.

41. Thus, the core of Travelport's declaratory judgment claim is that AA's fulfillment of its termination of Orbitz's ticketing authority would violate the express terms of the Full Content Agreement by depriving Travelport's affiliates of full content and other benefits.

42. Under the Full Content Agreement, AA specifically undertook and agreed that during the term of the Full Content Agreement, AA would make Preferred Channel Extras (e.g., the ability to sell upgrades and other highly valued additional products and services) available to Orbitz to the same extent that it makes such extras available to other online travel agencies. (See Section 3.5(b)). By withdrawing ticketing authority from Orbitz, AA would be in breach of the Full Content Agreement, would deprive Travelport of the benefit of its contracted for bargain, and frustrate the essential purpose of the Full Content Agreement.

43. Under the Full Content Agreement, AA specifically undertook and agreed that it would offer bulk/wholesale fares to Galileo OTA Affiliates, which includes Orbitz, on terms no less favorable then the terms AA offers to either of the two largest OTA competitors in the United States. (See Section 3.5(c)). By withdrawing ticketing authority from Orbitz, AA would be in breach of the Full Content Agreement, would deprive Travelport of the benefit of its contracted for bargain, and frustrate the essential purpose of the Full Content Agreement.

44. On November 1, 2010, after learning that AA sent the termination notices to Orbitz, Travelport informed AA by letter that AA's intended terminations would violate the Full Content Agreement. Specifically, Travelport informed AA that the terminations, which would result in AA no longer distributing AA inventory on Orbitz, would constitute a breach of the above-referenced sections of the Full Content Agreement.

45. Having a strong desire to avoid litigation and to find an amicable resolution with a valued supplier, Travelport reached out to AA multiple times to seek a business resolution.

Unfortunately, AA remained steadfast and rebuffed Travelport's repeated efforts at compromise. These efforts included Travelport requesting that AA withdraw its termination notices.

46. Given AA's failure to withdraw the termination notices, an actual controversy exists between Travelport and AA regarding the parties' rights and obligations under the Full Content Agreement. AA thereby has an opposing interest to that of Travelport with respect to AA's purported right to terminate its agreements with Travelport's affiliates.

47. Travelport maintains that AA's fulfillment of its promise to terminate the affiliate agreements would violate the express terms of the Full Content Agreement by depriving Travelport and its affiliates of full content and other benefits.

48. This would cause great harm and prejudice to Travelport, and to Travelport's affiliates in which Travelport has a substantial pecuniary interest.

49. A declaratory judgment would afford security and relief against the uncertainty of the issues raised herein.

50. A declaratory judgment would settle and fix the parties' rights before there is an irrevocable change in the parties' positions that will jeopardize their respective claims of right.

WHEREFORE, Travelport requests that this Court: i) determine the rights and obligations of the parties to the Full Content Agreement, and specifically determine that AA's threatened termination of the agreements with Travelport's affiliates will be a breach of the Full Content Agreement and a violation of Travelport's rights thereunder; ii) preliminarily enjoin AA during the pendency of this action from terminating the agreements referenced in paragraph 23 of this complaint and from terminating Orbitz's ability to ticket AA flights; iii) grant Travelport its costs and fees incurred in bringing this action; iv) enter an order allowing all relief available under 735 ILCS 5/2-701; and v) enter an order granting such other and further relief that the Court deems appropriate.

TRAVELPORT, LP

By: ____________________
One Of Its Attorneys

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SECTION 1-109 VERIFICATION

The undersigned certifies that the statements set forth in this Verified Complaint for Declaratory Judgment are true and correct, except as to those matters therein stated to be on information and belief and as to such matters the undersigned certifies as aforesaid that he verily believes the same to be true.

Dated: 11/5/2010

Kurt Ekert
Chief Commercial Officer

EXHIBIT A

Item 1.02. Termination of a Material Definitive Agreement.

On November 1, 2010, American Airlines, Inc. ("AA") notified Orbitz Worldwide, LLC, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Orbitz Worldwide, Inc. (the "Company") and direct parent of Orbitz, LLC ("Orbitz"), of its election to terminate the Second Amended and Restated Airline Charter Associate Agreement, dated December 19, 2003, by and between AA and Orbitz, LLC (the "Agreement"). The termination will be effective as of December 1, 2010.

The Agreement sets forth the terms under which Orbitz can offer air travel on behalf of AA to consumers and requires AA to provide the Company with agreed upon transaction payments when consumers book this travel. The Agreement also provides Orbitz with nondiscriminatory access to seat availability for published fares as well as marketing and promotional support. In exchange for this information and support, the Company pays AA a portion of the global distribution system ("GDS") fees that the Company receives from the GDS for AA transactions booked on the Orbitz.com and Orbitz for Business websites. The Agreement was scheduled to otherwise expire on December 31, 2013. The foregoing description of the Agreement is qualified in its entirety by reference to the form of the airline charter associate agreement entered into with AA and certain other airlines, a copy of which is filed as Exhibit 10.x to the Company's Annual Report on Form 10-K for the fiscal year ended December 31, 2009 ("Annual Report").

In the notice, AA also exercised its right to terminate the Supplier Link Agreement that it entered into with Orbitz in February 2004. The Supplier Link Agreement establishes a direct link between Orbitz.com and AA's internal reservation systems and requires that Orbitz book certain airline tickets through that direct link rather than through a GDS. In return, AA pays Orbitz a per ticket fee. The termination of the Supplier Link Agreement will also be effective as of December 1, 2010. A copy of the form of Supplier Link Agreement entered into with AA and certain other airlines is filed as Exhibit 10.x to the Annual Report.

Additionally, AA has informed the Company that it will terminate the Company's authority to ticket AA flights on its Orbitz.com and Orbitz for Business websites, to take effect as of December 1, 2010.

EXHIBIT B

Chicago Tribune – 11/4/10

Shares of online travel agency Orbitz Worldwide Inc. tumbled 18 percent on news that American Airlines has threatened to stop selling tickets on Orbitz sites.

Orbitz said American, the fourth-largest U.S. airline, was threatening to pull its content if the travel agency did not use a direct link to the carrier's inventory instead of a global distribution service, which negotiates prices.

The threat overshadowed Orbitz's report of higher-than-expected quarterly profit. Orbitz shares were down $1.27 to $5.55 in afternoon trading on the New York Stock Exchange.

"Given Orbitz has significantly higher exposure to air and domestic bookings than the other OTAs (online travel agencies), it will face the biggest headwind from this change, followed by Expedia, with Priceline impacted the least," Michael Olson, senior analyst at Piper Jaffray, said in a research note.

American, a unit of AMR Corp, said it would stop selling tickets on Orbitz starting Dec. 1 if Orbitz did not use a direct link to the airline's inventory.

The move would end American's contract with Orbitz three years early and erode revenue the company earns from air travel bookings.

Orbitz declined to say how much it earns from American's bookings. Airline bookings represent about 38 percent of Orbitz's business.

"We believe the current GDS model is the right solution for consumers to ensure that travel agents have access to full content and consumers are able to get access to all of an airline's publicly available fares," Orbitz Chief Executive Barney Harford told Reuters in an interview.

He said Orbitz was still negotiating with American.

"This is very much a fight that American is taking to the industry," Harford said, noting that airlines renegotiate terms with third-party bookers every few years.

American has long argued that it needs to cut its distribution costs and says the GDS model prevents it from offering the lowest possible fares. Rival Southwest Airlines has relatively low distribution costs because it avoids selling tickets through online travel agencies.

"It is important that our distribution channels be cost-effective and efficient," said AMR spokeswoman Mary Sanderson.

"Customers benefit when inefficiencies in the travel distribution marketplace are addressed," she said.

Orbitz, which owns travel sites Orbitz.com and Cheaptickets.com, said third-quarter net profit more than doubled to $15.3 million, or 15 cents a share, from $7.0 million, or 8 cents a share, a year earlier.

Analysts on average were expecting 9 cents a share, according to Thomson Reuters I/B/E/S. The company said revenue rose 4 percent to $194.5 million, below forecasts for $196.1 million.

Orbitz said it expected a 1 percent to 2 percent increase in revenue for the full year.

The travel industry has been battered in recent years by an economic downturn that drained demand for airline tickets and hotel rooms.

"Last year was certainly a weak year for travel demand, and I think we've certainly seen business travel come back over the course of 2010," Harford said.

The company's third-quarter gross bookings rose 12 percent to $2.81 billion, helped by higher air fares and increased transaction volume, Orbitz said in a statement.

The results follow news last week of a strong third quarter at rival Expedia Inc and suggest that travel demand is picking up after the recent recession.

Expedia, the largest online travel agency, said last week that the total value of its bookings rose 17 percent in the third quarter.

The other publicly traded online travel agency, Priceline.com Inc, is due to report earnings on Monday.

NOVEMBER 4, 2010, 7:05 P.M. ET

4th UPDATE: American Threatens To Pull Listings From Orbitz

(Updates with more details about American Airline program in the sixth paragraph.)

By Shara Tibken
Of DOW JONES NEWSWIRES

NEW YORK (Dow Jones)--AMR Corp.'s (AMR) American Airlines said it would pull its flight listings from Orbitz Worldwide Inc. (OWW), beginning Dec. 1, unless the two companies can agree on how the online-travel agent gets access to the data.

Airlines--American in particular--have been vocal in wanting travel agents and online travel sites to share the expenses of accessing flight listings. American's move is an attempt to change how that data are distributed, reduce the airline's costs and enable it to get a bigger piece of online-travel purchases.

Orbitz said American is threatening to disrupt the current system.

American wants to "force agencies to connect directly to [American's] system to access content as opposed to using global distribution systems," or GDSs, Orbitz President and Chief Executive Barney Harford said Thursday.

Traditionally, a GDS--such as Travelport Ltd. and Sabre Holdings Corp. (TSG)--acts as intermediary between travel agents and travel providers, facilitating the search and booking of flights. The GDS charges the airline a fee when a travel agent books a flight.

Cory Garner, American Airlines' director of distribution strategies, disagreed with Orbitz's characterization. He said American isn't looking to bypass the GDS; rather, the airline wants to use new technology that routes the data differently and allows flights to be customized. It also would make optional service costs, like priority seating and baggage fees, more transparent.

Garner said American also would like to include the option of communicating directly with travel agents through its Direct Connect program. He said American has been in talks with the GDS companies about using Direct Connect, but no agreement has been reached.

GDS companies were established before the Internet to make it easier for travel agents to access flight booking information. Sabre was built by American in the 1960s and was spun off from the company in 2000. GDS companies remain big players in linking airlines to high-margin business travelers via travel agents and corporate accounts.

American's Garner, however, said the cost has risen beyond what American considers market-competitive prices, leading the company to rethink the distribution model.

The travel industry was hit hard during the recession, with consumers and business travelers scaling back on spending. To deal with waning revenue, airlines slashed capacity and costs, and charged customers for everything from beverages to checked luggage. With little left to cut, airlines have looked to distribution costs as the next big frontier in terms of reducing expenses.

American said the decision wasn't made because of anything Orbitz did and that the airline is in various stages of discussion with other online travel agents.

"It's very clear that American has drawn a line in the sand and is girding itself for a fight," Forrester Research analyst Henry Harteveldt said. "I understand American's desire to reduce costs and have more control over its distribution strategy, but if it pulls out of GDS, it's possible it may be the only airline doing this and it may be counterproductive."

Orbitz CEO Harford said no other airlines or partners have approached Orbitz to terminate their agreements like American has.

"We have very strong relationships with the vast majority of our supply partners," Harford said. "This really is an initiative that is unique to American."

Orbitz shares, down 23% this year, closed down 17% to $5.63. Representatives from United Continental Holdings Inc. (UAL), Delta Air Lines Inc. (DAL) and US Airways Group Inc. (LCC) didn't respond to requests for comment.

American said customers can still compare and purchase American fares on Orbitz sites at this time and that the airline continues to negotiate with Orbitz to reach a "viable, mutually beneficial agreement."

Travelport said American's action may violate its "contractual obligations" and could lead to inefficiencies and associated costs. Travelport said it would take "a number of actions to defend travel agents and consumers" but didn't specify its moves.

Travelport, which owns about 48% of Orbitz, is a private company owned by Blackstone Group L.P. (BX), One Equity Partners, Technology Crossover Ventures and Travelport management.

Representatives from Orbitz rivals Expedia Inc. (EXPE) and Priceline.com Inc. (PCLN) didn't respond to requests for comment, nor did Sabre, which also owns online travel agent Travelocity.

A representative from Travelocity said in an emailed statement that the company "has not received any correspondence from [American] on this matter" and said the company has nothing else to say at this time.

Expedia shares slid 5.3% to $27.17, and Priceline added 13 cents to $380.12.

Meanwhile, Orbitz reported a third-quarter profit of $15.3 million, or 15 cents a share, above year-ago earnings of $7 million, or 8 cents a share, and the average estimate of analysts surveyed by Thomson Reuters of 9 cents a share.

Revenue increased 4% to $194.5 million. The company in August projected revenue growth of 3% to 6%, below analysts' views at the time.

Gross bookings climbed 12%, mostly on higher air fares and transaction volume. Flights bookings rose 13%, while hotel-room nights soared 57%.

CEO Harford said Orbitz factored in the potential impact from the American Airlines issue into its financial forecast for the year. The company said it expects revenue to rise 1% to 2% from 2009. It also lowered its expectations for full-year earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortization to 4% to 6% growth from previous estimates for 5% to 10% growth.

-By Shara Tibken, Dow Jones Newswires; 212-416-2189; shara.tibken@dowjones.com

Bloomberg

Orbitz Shares Drop on American Airlines Ticket Threat

By Mary Schlangenstein and Will Daley - Nov 4, 2010

Orbitz Worldwide Inc. fell the most since February after American Airlines said it would stop providing fare data to the online travel agency, blocking it from selling tickets after Dec. 1 unless a new contract is reached.

For now, customers may continue to buy the airline's tickets on Orbitz and Orbitz-powered sites, Mary Sanderson, a spokeswoman for American, said in an e-mail. Orbitz disclosed the plan by American, the third-biggest U.S. airline, in a U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission filing.

American is pushing for online travel agencies such as Orbitz to obtain flight and fare information directly from the airline, instead of through a global distribution system such as Sabre Holdings Corp. or Travelport LLC's Galileo and Worldspan, said Barney Harford, Orbitz chief executive officer. There is no indication that other airlines will follow American's lead, he said in an interview today.

"This is a broad attack by American on the travel distribution landscape," Harford said on a conference call with analysts and investors. "Clearly our announcement today is the first salvo here."

Orbitz dropped $1.16, or 17 percent, to $5.66 at 3:12 p.m. in New York Stock Exchange composite trading. The shares fell as much as 19 percent earlier, the biggest intraday decline since Feb. 23. AMR, based in Fort Worth, Texas, increased 6 cents to $8.43.

'Call American's Bluff'

American can't afford to pull its content off all the global distribution systems, and its conflict with Orbitz is a "private negotiation that suddenly became public," said Jay Sorensen, president of aviation consultant Ideaworks and a former marketing director at Midwest Airlines.

"I don't see an agenda here for American to remake the travel industry," Sorensen said in an interview. "American is doing what's smart in terms of negotiating. You threaten to do something that you in fact are willing to do. Orbitz may call American's bluff."

American will seek to "negotiate mutually beneficial contracts" with other agencies as existing ones expire, the airline said in an e-mailed statement.

Travelocity.com Inc. has not been contacted by American on the issue, said Joel Frey, a spokesman for the Fort Worth, Texas-based travel agency. Priceline.com Inc., Kayak.com and Expedia Inc. didn't immediately return calls for comment.

'Range of Issues'

A "range of issues" are being negotiated by Orbitz and American, Sanderson said. She declined to comment on specifics because negotiations continue. The airline doesn't agree with Harford's characterization of the dispute, she said.

"We continue to negotiate in good faith to reach a viable, mutually beneficial agreement with Orbitz," Sanderson said. "We believe it is important that our distribution channels be cost-effective and efficient."

Orbitz is among a number of online travel agencies that allow customers to book airline tickets, rent cars and hotels. Consumers are able to compare prices and schedules of various airlines before making a choice.

American, which has said it pays "hundreds of millions of dollars annually" to global distribution systems such as Sabre and Galileo, has developed its Direct Connect service to provide information on fares and options directly to larger online travel agencies. Smaller companies still may use a content aggregator to obtain their data.

'Completely Inefficient'

Global distribution systems "ensure travel agents can offer consumers a comprehensive choice of airlines," Harford said. "It is completely inefficient for each travel agency to have to connect to hundreds of airlines. We are actively working to resolve this issue."

Travelport, based in Atlanta, said in a statement that an attempt by American to force a move to a more restrictive distribution system may violate the airline's contract. The company said it was "taking a number of steps" in response, without providing specifics.

American declined to provide a figure for ticket sales through Orbitz or other online agencies. Orbitz also declined to break out income from American sales.

Orbitz said today third-quarter gross bookings rose 12 percent from a year ago to $2.81 billion. Net income more than doubled to $15.3 million. Airline-ticket sales provide about 38 percent of Orbitz's total revenue, Harford said.

Orbitz and AMR entered into an agreement in December 2003, according to the SEC filing.

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CNBC.com

American Airlines could pull tickets off Orbitz

The Associated Press | 04 Nov 2010 | 05:09 PM ET

DALLAS - American Airlines could pull its ticket listings from Orbitz on Dec. 1 in a dispute over how the online travel website gets information about flights and prices.

The news on Thursday caused shares of Orbitz Worldwide Inc. to plunge more than 17 percent.

Barney Harford, the CEO of Orbitz Worldwide Inc., said American was trying to force travel agencies to get information directly from the company instead of through middlemen called global distribution systems, or GDSs. He said American's strategy would limit consumers' ability to compare airline prices.

Orbitz is controlled by privately held Travelport Limited, which also owns the Worldspan and Galileo GDSs.

American spokeswoman Mary Sanderson disputed Orbitz's statements but declined to give specifics, saying the two companies were still negotiating over the issue.

URL: http://www.cnbc.com/id/40014705/

USA Today: American Airlines threatens to pull flight information from Orbitz, November 5, 2010

American Airlines is threatening to pull its flight information and tickets from Orbitz on Dec. 1 if they can't agree on new financial terms more favorable to the airline.

Shares of Orbitz, an online travel agency, fell sharply on the news Wednesday, ending 17% lower. Orbitz revealed its row with American Airlines in a filing for the Securities and Exchange Commission.

American Airlines is insisting that online travel agencies such as Orbitz obtain flight information directly from the airline, instead of getting them from global distribution systems. GDS companies, such as Sabre, Galileo and Worldspan, provide computerized airline information to travel agencies and other Internet companies for booking tickets. Orbitz is controlled by Travelport, which also owns the Worldspan and Galileo GDSs.

"Customers still can compare fares and purchase tickets for travel on American Airlines on Orbitz and Orbitz-powered sites today, and we will continue to negotiate in good faith to reach a viable, mutually beneficial agreement with Orbitz," American Airlines said in a statement released Wednesday. "AA's position remains that our distribution channels need to be cost-effective and efficient while also enabling more choices for customers through new products/service offerings."

American spokeswoman Mary Sanderson told the Associated Press that travel agencies could get more information tailored to individual consumers by connecting directly to American's reservations system, "and we won't have to pay as much for it."

Airlines pay GDS companies each time consumers search or book a flight, but have been looking to cut distribution costs. American must compete against low-cost airlines such as Southwest that sell tickets directly on their own websites and save money they would otherwise pay third-party distributors. Customers wishing to book Southwest flights must buy directly from the carrier's website.

American Airlines says it can deliver "more customized and relevant products and services" to its customers through its partners. But "products and services in air travel continue to evolve as airlines distinguish themselves from one another and the same must be true for how products are distributed."

American Airlines would find it difficult to pull its content from GDS companies, Jay Sorensen, president of aviation consultant Ideaworks, told Bloomberg. "American is doing what's smart in terms of negotiating. You threaten to do something that you in fact are willing to do. Orbitz may call American's bluff."

font size: A A A email print

Travelport and AA Clash Over Direct Connect

Nov 04, 2010 By: George Dooley TravelAgentCentral

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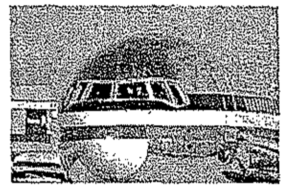

Travel agents and travel management firms are at the center of a clash between global distribution giant Travelport and American Airlines (AA) over AA's Direct Connect program.

Travelport said AA's decision to implement Direct Connect is "anti-consumer and anti-competitive" and that Travelport will take action to "defend travel agents and consumers."

Travelport is also communicating its position to travel agents and asking for comments. A detailed backgrounder on the issue was also sent to agents.

According to AA, the AA Direct Connect provides a direct link into AA's host reservation system to facilitate the availability, shopping and pricing, booking, ticketing, and post-ticketing servicing transactions.

"The AA Direct Connect utilizes modern technology links and XML messaging, which can handle more robust and flexible transactions," Travelport said. "The AA Direct Connect is designed to support future merchandising and ancillary services." AA has invited agents' participation in the program. Visit http://directconnect.aa.com.

Travelport counters by arguing that it "strongly supports the consumers' right to maximum transparency and the ability to shop, compare, and book travel services wherever they choose," and believes that AA's action to coerce a more restrictive model under threat would violate AA's contractual obligations with Travelport.

"AA's plans and the resulting inefficiencies and associated costs would be detrimental to airline customers, travel agencies and consumers," Travelport said. "Travelport's dispute is solely with AA. Travelport hopes to resolve this dispute to the benefit of consumers and travel agents."

Travelport's 'Myth- Busting' communication with travel agents urged agents to look behind the myths and separate facts from fiction. Travelport's position:

Myth: Direct Connect makes the best economic sense for agencies.

Fact: Travelport understands that AA wants to drastically reduce agency distribution payments even though those payments already represent a very small percentage of the value of the tickets sold. AA is aggressively trying to persuade agencies to bypass the GDSs by offering agencies short-term incentives to shift AA bookings to a direct connection. But a successful direct connection will result in the 100 percent long-term loss of an agency's financial assistance (FA) through the GDS for all of its AA bookings. Also, even if AA offers an agency an increased incentive to offset the lost FA for some period, the agency is still left with the inefficiencies of booking most airlines through the GDS, and having to book AA through a direct channel. If some additional carriers require the same, then the inefficiencies will be even worse.

Myth: Direct Connect is efficient.

Fact: Direct Connect would require agencies to connect directly to AA's systems to book a flight. Direct Connect would therefore require an agency to spend time and money to change its computer systems to allow the booking to be made on AA's internal system. Direct Connect would also generate multiple travel records that agents would be required to coordinate, thereby creating still more inefficiencies. Additionally, typical GDS processing (i.e. availability, pricing, shopping, PNR creation, and ticketing) would be moved within AA's platform, causing the agency to create duplicate steps in day-to-day processes. The Direct Connect process will not allow shopping and booking to be completed in the GDS which eliminates the tremendous one-stop efficiencies that led to the creation of the GDSs by the airlines in the first place. Again, if additional carriers follow AA's lead, these inefficiencies will be compounded.

Myth: Direct Connect is the best alternative for consumers.

Fact: American Airlines says it would like to offer individual customization so each customer would receive a fare or bundle of services based on the individual customer's travel patterns, preferences, etc. Travelport would be pleased to work with AA to deliver additional customization functionality to our agency customers, and our evolving technology platforms are fully capable of delivering customized offers. But AA's proposed Direct Connect solution is really confusing because you will be forced to use multiple systems thereby causing great difficulties in providing your customers informed choices. The comparisons you make every day to serve customers' best interests - to match their preferred flight times and find the best routings and fares - will be dramatically more difficult.

Myth: The GDS can't support the individual customization that American Airlines wants.

Fact: Travelport is ready, willing and able to work with AA to deliver the customization AA is talking about. The Travelport Universal Desktop and Travelport Universal API products demonstrate commitment to invest in new technology that solves for individual customization and aggregation of new content not historically available within the GDS, while creating an efficient desktop for travel agents that also allows suppliers to customize and differentiate their content. While Travelport would be pleased to work with American Airlines to deliver these products to our agency customers, AA apparently intends to limit all GDS agencies' access to full content such as low fares and ancillary services based solely upon AA's own criteria. Travelport will not support discrimination against its agency customers."

Travelport said it is actively leading industry efforts to "deploy new technology and new economic models," as evidenced by its existing long term full content agreements with most of the other major U.S. carriers including Continental, United, and Delta.

"The GDS infrastructure is exceptionally reliable and capable of delivering on all the carriers' requirements and customization initiatives," Travelport said in its analysis. "Forcing airlines and agencies to spend tens of millions of dollars to build an entirely new system is simply unnecessary, and your business should not be subjected to such disruption. The most efficient course to enhance your business, provide broad distribution, and ensure consumer choice and transparency is for us to continue to work closely together and with economics that are beneficial for all participants in the distribution network. We at Travelport are always open to your thoughts and concerns."

Visit www.Travelport.com.

REUTERS

UPDATE 3-AMR threat sends Orbitz shares tumbling

Thu Nov 04 19:01:03 UTC 2010

* American Airlines threatens to pull content on Dec. 1
* Orbitz shares down 18 percent
* Orbitz Q3 EPS 15 cents vs Wall St view 9 cents (Recasts; adds analyst comment; updates shares)

By Kyle Peterson

CHICAGO, Nov 4 (Reuters) - Shares of online travel agency Orbitz Worldwide Inc <OWW.N> tumbled 18 percent on news that American Airlines has threatened to stop selling tickets on Orbitz sites.

Orbitz said American, the fourth-largest U.S. airline, was threatening to pull its content if the travel agency did not use a direct link to the carrier's inventory instead of a global distribution service, which negotiates prices.

The threat overshadowed Orbitz's report of higher-than-expected quarterly profit. Orbitz shares were down $1.27 to $5.55 in afternoon trading on the New York Stock Exchange.

"Given Orbitz has significantly higher exposure to air and domestic bookings than the other OTAs (online travel agencies), it will face the biggest headwind from this change, followed by Expedia, with Priceline impacted the least," Michael Olson, senior analyst at Piper Jaffray, said in a research note.

American, a unit of AMR Corp <AMR.N>, said it would stop selling tickets on Orbitz starting Dec. 1 if Orbitz did not use a direct link to the airline's inventory.

The move would end American's contract with Orbitz three years early and erode revenue the company earns from air travel bookings.

Orbitz declined to say how much it earns from American's bookings. Airline bookings represent about 38 percent of Orbitz's business.

"We believe the current GDS model is the right solution for consumers to ensure that travel agents have access to full content and consumers are able to get access to all of an airline's publicly available fares," Orbitz Chief Executive Barney Harford told Reuters in an interview. He said Orbitz was still negotiating with American.

"This is very much a fight that American is taking to the industry," Harford said, noting that airlines renegotiate terms with third-party bookers every few years.

American has long argued that it needs to cut its distribution costs and says the GDS model prevents it from offering the lowest possible fares. Rival Southwest Airlines <LUV.N> has relatively low distribution costs because it avoids selling tickets through online travel agencies.

"It is important that our distribution channels be cost-effective and efficient," said AMR spokeswoman Mary Sanderson.

"Customers benefit when inefficiencies in the travel distribution marketplace are addressed," she said.

Orbitz, which owns travel sites Orbitz.com and Cheaptickets.com, said third-quarter net profit more than doubled to $15.3 million, or 15 cents a share, from $7.0 million, or 8 cents a share, a year earlier.

Analysts on average were expecting 9 cents a share, according to Thomson Reuters I/B/E/S. [ID:nASA00ZG3]

The company said revenue rose 4 percent to $194.5 million, below forecasts for $196.1 million.

Orbitz said it expected a 1 percent to 2 percent increase in revenue for the full year.

The travel industry has been battered in recent years by an economic downturn that drained demand for airline tickets and hotel rooms.

"Last year was certainly a weak year for travel demand, and I think we've certainly seen business travel come back over the course of 2010," Harford said.

The company's third-quarter gross bookings rose 12 percent to $2.81 billion, helped by higher air fares and increased transaction volume, Orbitz said in a statement.

The results follow news last week of a strong third quarter at rival Expedia Inc <EXPE.O> and suggest that travel demand is picking up after the recent recession.

Expedia, the largest online travel agency, said last week that the total value of its bookings rose 17 percent in the third quarter. [ID:nN28128596]

The other publicly traded online travel agency, Priceline.com Inc <PCLN.O>, is due to report earnings on Monday. (Reporting by Kyle Peterson in Chicago and Bijoy Koyitty in Bangalore; Editing by Lisa Von Ahn and John Wallace)

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American Airlines stops giving data to Orbitz

Print

By Jeremy Lemer in New York

Published: November 4 2010 23:55 | Last updated: November 4 2010 23:55

Shares in Orbitz slumped 17 per cent on Thursday after the online travel company said that American Airlines had decided to stop providing it with data – a move that would effectively prevent it from selling American tickets from next month.

American has long pushed for travellers and agents to connect directly with its computers and website to book tickets rather than using third-party sites and global distribution systems – intermediaries that collate pricing and reservations data – to reduce costs.

Barney Harford, Orbitz chief executive, said the move was a "broad attack on the travel distribution landscape", not just his company.

American said it was negotiating in good faith to reach cost effective deals with Orbitz and others.

Michael Olson, analyst with Piper Jaffray, noted that "given Orbitz has significantly higher exposure to air and domestic bookings than the other online travel agencies, it will face the biggest headwind from this change".

Sales of airline tickets have been declining as a proportion of revenues as Orbitz has focused on selling hotel rooms, but ticket sales still contributed about 38 per cent to total revenues in the third quarter.

Despite the news, Orbitz reported improved quarterly results. Net income more than doubled to about $15m on revenues, up 4 per cent to $194m.

Orbitz shares slid to $5.63 and are now down about 23 per cent year to date.

REUTERS

WRAPUP 6-Qantas says A380 engine failure may be "design issue"

Fri Nov 05 15:58:23 UTC 2010

* Qantas A380 safety checks to take 24-48 hours
* Singapore Airlines resumes A380 flights
* EU safety body asked for checks on engine "wear" in August
* Qantas 747 on same route turns back on Friday
* Qantas confirms second engine on QF32 failed to shut down
* Qantas shares end down 1 pct, vs broader market up 1.2 pct

(Updates with 747 on same route turning back on Friday)

By Michael Perry and Victoria Thieberger

SYDNEY/MELBOURNE, Nov 5 (Reuters) - A faulty part or design issue may have caused the severe damage to an engine that forced a Qantas Airways <QAN.AX> Airbus A380 to make an emergency landing in Singapore, Qantas's boss said on Friday.

Separately, a European Union air safety body confirmed it told airlines in August to make checks after finding "wear, beyond engine manual limits" on the type of Rolls-Royce <RR.L> engines fitted to the Qantas jet and some other A380s.

And less than 48 hours after the A380 incident, a Qantas Boeing <BA.N> 747 flying the same Sydney route returned to Singapore, also as a result of engine trouble. [ID:nSGA127687]

The A380 engine failure on Thursday, which scattered debris over an Indonesian island, was the biggest incident to date for the world's largest passenger plane, in service only since 2007.

The incident saw Qantas ground its fleet of six A380s pending safety checks which will take 24-48 hours, and led other airlines to check their own A380s. All A380s have four engines.

"We believe this is probably most likely a material failure or some sort of design issue," Joyce told a news conference in Sydney. "If we don't find any adverse findings in those checks the aircraft will resume operations.". <^^ EU watchdog flagged engine wear in August [ID:nSGE6A401F] Incident poses Airbus cost challenge [ID:nLDE6A30KT] FACTBOX-Qantas has never had fatal accident [ID:nSGE6A306M] FACTBOX-Sizing up the Airbus A380 [ID:nLDE6A31OW] TIMELINE-Events leading up to A380 incident [ID:nLDE6A31KZ] For a graphic, click: link.reuters.com/fan73q Slideshow of Qantas plane: r.reuters.com/pum73q ^^>

The Australian Transport Safety Bureau said there was no indication foul play had contributed to the incident on the Sydney-bound flight.

Singapore Airlines <SIAL.SI> resumed flying its A380s on Friday, lifting a grounding order imposed after the Qantas incident.

Singapore's clearance of its 11 A380s -- the second largest fleet after Emirates [EMIRA.UL] -- will be a relief for European planemaker Airbus <EAD.PA> and British enginemaker Rolls-Royce, which lost over $1.5 billion in combined market value on Thursday.

EADS shares were flat on Friday, after Thursday's 4 percent fall, while Rolls-Royce shares fell a further 3.3 percent to 601 pence after a 5 percent slide the previous day.

German airline Lufthansa <LHAG.DE> said it had withdrawn an A380 from a Frankfurt-Johannesburg flight because it had not had enough time to check the engines before departure.

British A380 engine maker Rolls-Royce told A380 operators to perform safety checks on Trent 900 engines. [ID:nLDE6A322A]

EADS also told A380 operators using Rolls-Royce engines to have them inspected.

Speaking to Reuters in Paris on Thursday at a ceremony where Chinese buyers were signing to buy Airbus planes, sales chief John Leahy said he had not received pressure from airlines about the A380's safety. [ID:nLDE6A32M4]

"No concerns whatsoever," he said, asked if Airbus customers had expressed safety worries following the engine scare, adding: "We have to find out the reason for the engine failure".

One passenger aboard flight QF32 reported hearing a "massive bang" while photographs of the engine

showed its outer, rear casing had been torn apart.
"The fact that it survived the damage is a credit to the design. Twenty years ago that would probably have taken the aircraft out of the sky," said John Page, senior lecturer in Aerospace Engineering at the University of New South Wales.
Passengers also reported a second engine on the stricken Qantas aircraft failed to shut down once on the tarmac, sparking fears it could ignite spilling fuel from the failed engine.
SECOND ENGINE PROBLEM
Joyce confirmed the other engine had failed to shut down after landing but said it could have been affected by the mishap to the first engine which caused parts to fly off. "We are still investigating the causes," he said.
Passengers said after landing they had been told of the dangers of using any electronic device as fire fighters sprayed the aircraft which was leaking fuel from a hole in the wing.
"Obviously in the back of your mind you are concerned about a very hot engine next to leaking fuel," passenger Christopher Lee said. "Obviously, you are in a state of anxiety."
Qantas said its engineers, along with those from Airbus and Rolls-Royce, were working to determine what went wrong.
"Rolls-Royce have identified a number of potential areas," said Joyce. "This issue does not relate to maintenance."
Rolls-Royce has maintained the engines since they were installed on the aircraft, he said. The company gets a goodly proportion of its revenues from such service contracts.
Qantas shares ended down 1 percent at A$2.86 on Friday, underperforming the broader market <.AXJO> which advanced 1.2 percent to a six-month high.
Commonwealth Bank aviation analyst Matt Crowe said there was unlikely to be long-term reputational damage, as investors had tended to move on from previous safety incidents which have never resulted in a fatal crash for Qantas.
Joyce said it was too early to assess the financial impact of grounding its six A380s, but Crowe estimated the grounding could cost up to A$20 million ($20.3 million) in revenues if the planes remained on the ground for a week.
By comparison, the volcanic ash cloud that disrupted European air travel in April this year lasted about two weeks and cost Qantas A$46 million in costs and lost revenue. (Editing by Mark Bendeich and Dan Lalor)

Travel Agent Central: AA Responds to Travelport, Threatens End to Participation in Orbitz, November 5, 2010

Customers still can compare fares and purchase tickets for travel on American Airlines on Orbitz and Orbitz-powered sites, American Airlines (AA) said in response to statements by Orbitz and Travelport critical of AA's decision to launch Direct Connect.

"We will continue to negotiate in good faith to reach a viable, mutually beneficial agreement with Orbitz," the carrier said in a statement. "AA's position remains that our distribution channels need to be cost-effective and efficient while also enabling more choices for customers through new products/service offerings."

American responded to Travelport's charges that AA's Direct Connect policy was anticompetitive, in addition to issuing a December 1 threat to end to AA participation in Orbitz.

"American Airlines can deliver more customized and relevant products and services to our customers through our travel partners, but we must look beyond the current paradigm to succeed in this quest," AA said in its statement. "Products and services in air travel continue to evolve as airlines distinguish themselves from one another and the same must be true for how products are distributed. This is an opportunity for our travel agency partners to distinguish themselves from their competition and better serve our joint customers."

Barney Harford, Orbitz Worldwide's president and CEO, also addressed the issue, confirming that Orbitz may face a December 1 termination of AA's participation. "American Airlines sent us a letter earlier this week indicating its intent to terminate its participation on our Orbitz and Orbitz for Business sites effective December 1," Harford said. "American Airlines has publicly expressed its intention to force agencies to connect directly to its systems in order to access its content. The current GDS model is pro-competitive and pro-consumer. GDSs ensure that travel agents have access to 'full content,' i.e. all an airline's publicly available fares.

"Furthermore, GDSs enhance competition between airlines, and create transparency, by ensuring that travel agents can offer consumers a comprehensive choice of airlines," Harford continued. "A number of business travel and consumer advocacy organizations have criticized American's effort, and we join them in that criticism. By taking this action, American is attempting to limit travelers' choices when they can least afford it. At Orbitz Worldwide we operate websites globally that serve millions of consumers every month, and we sell tens of millions of airline tickets every year. American and Orbitz are both important participants in the travel distribution landscape. Orbitz is working actively to resolve this issue to the benefit of our mutual customers."

Paul Ruden, ASTA's senior vice president of legal and industry affairs said that he expected ASTA to issue a statement on the controversy early next week. Central to AA's position is its efforts to recruit agents and travel management firms to use AA's Direct Connect system.

The Business Travel Coalition (BTC) and the Interactive Travel Services Association (ITSA) are also expecteed to weigh in on the issue.

Tnooz: Direct connect dispute — American Airlines to pull flights off Orbitz Dec. 1, November 4, 2010

ShareUPDATE: Barney Harford, president and CEO of Orbitz Worldwide, blasted American's threat to remove its flights from Orbitz Dec. 1 as "a broad attack by American on the distribution landscape."

Speaking during Orbitz's third quarter earnings call, Harford says Orbitz continues to negotiate with American over the issue, but believes the airline's actions are designed to fragment content, limit consumer choice and force travelers to bear American's distribution costs.

Harford said GDSs play an essential role in negotiating with airlines on behalf of travel agencies and that a direct-connect approach would serve to fragment content. Although a public company, Orbitz Worldwide is controlled by Travelport, which operates the Galileo and Worldspan GDSs.

Harford said he was unaware if American is taking a similar approach with other online travel agencies.

The original story follows:

American Airlines apparently has expanded its direct-connect drive beyond the GDSs and taken it to the online travel agencies, specifically Orbitz.

In a regulatory filing, Orbitz says American notified Orbitz Worldwide that Orbitz.com and Orbitz for Business will no longer have the authority to ticket American flights beginning Dec. 1, 2010, Orbitz says.

The dispute, according to a source, revolves around American's demand that Orbitz connect to AA Direct Connect for flight inventory and ancillary services, and consequent distribution economics. American wants to take control of its own merchandising through AA Direct Connect rather than have it handled by third parties, including OTAs and GDSs. Farelogix is contracted to handle direct-connects for American.

Orbitz says the airline notified it Nov. 1 that it will terminate Charter Associate and Supplier Link agreements with Orbitz Dec. 1.

The charter associate agreement had its origins when American and other major carriers founded Orbitz in 2001. It was due to expire at the end of 2013.

The charter associate agreement provides Orbitz with transaction payments, marketing support and nondiscriminatory access to seat availability for published fares. Also as part of the agreement, Orbitz pays a portion of American's GDS costs.

The Supplier Link agreement, signed in 2004, requires Orbitz to book an agreed-upon number of flights through a direct-connect between Orbitz and American's internal reservation instead of through a GDS.

American apparently is insisting that Orbitz connect directly to AA Direct Connect instead of through the current supplier link setup, a move that Orbitz is resisting because of the integration disruption, allegedly unproven track record of AA Direct Connect and unfavorable distribution economics.

Under the Supplier Link agreement, which American intends to terminate Dec. 1, the airline had to pay Orbitz a transaction fee for each ticket sold.

It looks like the Orbitz-American dispute is shaping up as a test case for American's future relationships with OTAs, and it could have repercussions for other airlines' OTA contracts, as well.

Consider American's notification to Orbitz as an opening salvo in their negotiations over the issue.

"For now, customers still can compare and purchase American's fares on Orbitz and Orbitz-powered sites," says Cory Garner, American's director of merchandising strategy, referring to the Dec. 1 cutoff date. "American values its longstanding relationship with Orbitz and desires an agreement that works for both parties."

Garner adds: "We continue to negotiate in good faith to reach a viable, mutually beneficial agreement with Orbitz. We believe it is important that our distribution channels be cost-effective and efficient. Consumers benefit when inefficiencies in the travel distribution marketplace are addressed."

Orbitz also released its third quarter financial results today.

In the third quarter, Orbitz Worldwide's net income increased 120% to $15.3 million on revenue of $194.5 million, a 4% jump.

Orbitz says the earnings growth was driven by gains in gross bookings, transactions and global room nights.

In the Orbitz Worldwide portfolio, eBookers was a particular standout. Room nights at eBookers climbed 57% in the third quarter, compared with a year earlier, Orbitz says.

Travelpulse: Travelport Attack on AA Escalates Airline, GDS Content Wars, November 4, 2010

Travelport has fired a broadside against American Airline's Direct Connect program, which is a direct link into American's reservation system for shopping pricing, booking, ticketing and post-ticketing transactions. Travelport, which owns two GDSs and Orbitz, issued a statement calling Direct Connect a GDS bypass that requires travel agencies to spend time and money to change their computer systems to allow bookings to be made on AA's internal system. Travelport also said Direct Connect would make more work for agencies because it means agencies have to have create and maintain duplicate records, because these transactions would be housed in American's internal systems. If other carriers follow American's lead, it compounds the inefficiencies, Travelport said.

Travelport said that American claims that Direct Connect enables individual customization that GDSs can't provide -- but Travelport says that's untrue.

"Travelport is ready, willing and able to work with AA to deliver the customization AA is talking about," Travelport said in its statement.

In addition, Travelport issued another statement saying that it "believes that AA's action to coerce a more restrictive model under threat would violate AA's contractual obligations with Travelport. AA's plans and the resulting inefficiencies and associated costs would be detrimental to airline customers, travel agencies and consumers."

The exchange is part of an ongoing battle between airlines and the GDSs, the technology systems that airlines created. The GDSs make money off the airlines when agents and consumers shop and book tickets on the GDSs; airlines continue to try to whittle those costs down.

The battle is becoming more complicated with the advent of ancillary fees, which the airlines say the GDSs are unable to handle. The GDSs say, however, that they have the functionality, but airlines are balking because they view making those fees transparent to agents and the public could put them at a competitive disadvantage. For more information, visit www.travelport.com.

TRAVEL WEEKLY
THE NATIONAL NEWSPAPER OF THE TRAVEL INDUSTRY

THE WEB

American Airlines threatens to pull inventory from Orbitz

By: Michael Fabey
November 04, 2010

Orbitz CEO Barney Harford said American Airlines has launched the "first salvo" at weakening third-party distributors by planning to "terminate the company's authority to ticket AA flights on its Orbitz.com and Orbitz for Business websites as of Dec. 1."

Harford told Wall Street analysts about American's intentions during Orbitz's third-quarter earnings call on Thursday.

American contends it is trying to offer passengers the most customized booking process it can as efficiently as possible.

Orbitz publicly detailed the American termination plan in documents filed with the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission. The company essentially said that the airline was exercising one of the provisions in a decade-long agreement signed in 2003 to give a 30-day termination notice.

Some analysts and other industry experts say American's tactic may be little more than a negotiation ploy to renegotiate its agreement with Orbitz.

"It's a private negotiation that has become public," said Jay Sorensen, president of consulting firm IdeaWorks. "This type of thing probably happens more than we realize."

UBS analyst Kevin Crissey said he thought American and Orbitz would work out some type of agreement. In a note to investors, he said the cancellation notice could be "leverage for a new deal."

"American has been targeting distribution costs for some time now, but this move is interesting," Crissey said.

American spokeswoman Mary Sanderson denied the termination notice was any negotiation ploy. The notice shows "we are serious," she said.

The American move certainly is a serious matter, Gurion said, with implications that could shake up the entire industry.

"This is a broad attack by American on the broad distribution landscape," he told analysts.

It's a move to bypass online travel agencies and other distributors, and drive business to American's website, he said.

That's not true, Sanderson said.

"We are negotiating in good faith with Orbitz to reach a mutually beneficial agreement that provides broad, efficient distribution while also enabling more choices for customers," she said in an emailed statement.

"Together with our travel partners, we can deliver more customized and relevant products and services to our customers, but we must look beyond the current paradigm to succeed. Products and services in air travel continue to evolve as airlines distinguish themselves from one another. This is an opportunity for our travel agency partners to distinguish themselves from their competition and better serve our joint customers."

Online agencies and others using GDS platforms simply can't deliver the type of customized booking product that American can, Sanderson said.

Travelport, Orbitz's largest investor, said, "AA is aggressively trying to persuade agencies to bypass the GDSs by offering agencies short-term incentives to shift AA bookings to a direct connection."

Travelport, a major player in the GDS business, owns the Galileo and Worldspan reservation systems.

"A successful direct connection will result in the 100% long-term loss of an agency's financial assistance through the GDS for all of its AA bookings," said Travelport.

"Also, even if AA offers an agency an increased incentive for some period, the agency is still left with the inefficiencies of booking most airlines through the GDS, and having to book AA through a direct channel. If additional carriers require the same, then the inefficiencies will be even worse. This just does not make the best economic sense."

Sabre officials say its GDS is ready to offer the kind of customized product American is touting.

"The GDSs are prepared from a technology perspective to help airlines market and sell their products, including targeted marketing to specific passengers," Sabre said. "We all are driving toward the adoption of an industry technology standard so the airlines and GDSs can quickly put into place the merchandising strategies the airlines are continuing to develop."

CORRECTION: Orbitz CEO Barney Harford made the American Airlines announcement during the earnings call.

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2010

American Airlines To Yank Content From Orbitz

By David Jonas and Jay Campbell
November 4, 2010

American Airlines has informed Orbitz Worldwide that it would "terminate the company's authority to ticket AA flights on its Orbitz.com and Orbitz for Business Web sites" as of Dec. 1, according to an Orbitz filing with the Securities and Exchange Commission.

The two parties were operating under an agreement signed in 2003 that was set to expire in 2013.

"We continue to negotiate in good faith to reach a viable, mutually beneficial agreement with Orbitz," according to an AA statement. "We believe it is important that our distribution channels be cost-effective and efficient."

Orbitz Worldwide CEO Barney Harford today told analysts that American Airlines' decision represents the "first salvo" in a "broad attack ... on the travel distribution landscape," including global distribution systems and "agencies in general."

Travelport, which owns 48 percent of Orbitz Worldwide, today said it is "taking a number of actions to defend travel agents and consumers commensurate with AA's anti-consumer and anti-competitive actions," but offered no further detail.

Examiner.com: American Airlines, Orbitz at odds over reservations technology, November 4, 2010

American Airlines will terminate the authority of Orbitz to ticket AA flights on Orbitz.com and other Orbitz outlets by December 1, reported Air Transport World Thursday. Statements from American Airlines and Orbitz owner Travelport do not mention the last date American flights can be ticketed by Orbitz, but Orbitz references American's decision to withdraw ticketing from the online travel agency, while American states it still hopes to reach a "viable, mutually beneficial agreement with Orbitz". Failing an agreement, AA tickets may be available from a more limited array of online vendors by next month. Travelocity, which is wholly owned by onetime American Airlines subsidiary Sabre Holdings told ATW they had received no similar communication from American. Expedia refused to comment to the airline industry news magazine.

American, grew to become the largest carrier in the United States on the strength of it's then-in-house SABRE system. American and other large carriers were in battles to install their systems into travel agencies throughout the country from their genesis in the 1960s through the zenith of travel agency airline sales in the days before airline tickets were made for sale on the internet. Today, the majority of airline tickets are sold airline and travel agency websites, although most airlines simply connect the sites to their reservations systems - technology which, in several cases, including SABRE, is entering it's fifth decade of existence.

American claims Global Distribution Systems (GDS), such as SABRE that it helped design are based on an older Edifact connection which does not allow the systems to display the more complicated add-ons and extras such as baggage fees and premium seat fees now offered by many legacy carriers. American prefers a more comprehensive yet largely untested XML connection with the GDS systems.

Travelport denies the claim that the traditional GDS programs are unable to deliver the level of customization that American requires. ATW reports that a number of distributors have said using American's technology would incur research, development, and implementation costs, noting that if other airlines follow suit, there would be mass confusion and a breakfdown of data communications between airlines and travel suppliers. However proponents of the XML connection point out that low cost carriers in Europe have used it to connect to traditional GDS platforms for years, albeit without the same level of complexity that is present at AA.

The Beat: Crissey: OTAs Not Surprised By AA's Orbitz Move, Expect Other Carriers To Follow, November 5, 2010

UBS analyst Kevin Crissey today issued a research note suggesting online travel agencies probably were not surprised by American Airlines' decision to cut off Orbitz, effective Dec. 1. "They've known for a while that airlines feel current agreements favor the OTAs and will push for better terms when contracts allow," he wrote. "The airline ticket agency business has been in decline for a long time and will continue to be."

Crissey added that "American is not unique in its desire to renegotiate distribution terms. Other airlines will likely be aggressive in pursuing this strategy, as well."

He pointed to the now infamous comments last year by AA CEO Gerard Arpey and Delta CEO Richard Anderson, who each put forward the notion that OTAs should pay airlines for content rather than airlines paying OTAs.

"The thought is that the OTAs make lots of money from selling hotels but customers come to the OTAs to first purchase airline tickets," Crissey continued. "Without airline tickets, OTAs wouldn't sell nearly as many higher-margin hotel rooms."

Crissey offered several reasons why airlines look unfavorably on OTA bookings: they are generally low-yield leisure bookings; they "cannibalize" airline websites, which he estimated as incurring $2 per segment in distribution costs versus an OTA's $5 per-segment cost; and they generally don't "upsell" customers into higher-priced seats. He also suggested that "clever airlines are negotiating contracts with OTAs which provide OTAs with bigger financial incentives for bookings in 'backhaul' markets outside of their hubs."

Before year-end, AA and Orbitz will settle on new terms, Crissey predicted. Ultimately, "We think American is likely to receive better financial terms," he wrote, and meanwhile "Orbitz has to diversify into hotels quickly."

AA's decision also impacts Orbitz for Business, the company's corporate travel division.

In assessing the financial hit to Orbitz, Crissey explained that the OTA's problem is less about AA's individual stance and more about the likelihood of several other airlines looking to similarly renegotiate their Orbitz deals.

"Unfortunately for Orbitz, 36 percent of its trailing 12-month revenue came from air," he wrote. "This exposes far too much revenue to pricing pressure." As such, UBS lowered its 2010 estimated earnings per share for Orbitz to $0.17 from $0.23 and its 2011 estimated EPS to $0.30 from $0.37.

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Reactionary Air Cargo Security Directives Raise AAPA Concerns

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Asian carriers are amongst the leaders in the global air cargo industry, carrying roughly 40% of global air freight.

Products transported by air make up 35% of the total value of goods traded internationally, and air cargo is critical to the smooth functioning of the global economy and everyday modern life.

Carriers operate in strict compliance with the relevant government aviation security requirements and Asian carriers are at the forefront of addressing emerging threats with government security agencies and other involved stakeholders to ensure that passenger air travel remains safe, secure and convenient.

The Association of Asia Pacific Airlines (AAPA) has consistently emphasised the need for government agencies and the aviation industry to work cooperatively together to maintain a secure supply chain.

Regarding the need for new security measures, AAPA Director General, Andrew Herdman said, "We long ago learned that it is human nature that each new security incident prompts a desire to introduce yet more security measures, but it takes a certain political maturity to remain calm, and not fall into the trap of knee jerk reactions by the imposition of new security measures of unproven effectiveness. Security comes at a cost, already measured in tens of billions of dollars annually for aviation alone, and new security procedures are only justified when it can be demonstrated that the benefits outweigh the additional burdens they impose on society."

On a positive note, Mr Herdman stressed, "The key lessons from this, and previous terrorist incidents, are the critical importance of effective intelligence gathering, and the need for governments to work closely with industry in developing and applying appropriate operational measures."

Mr Herdman concluded by saying, "We must not forget that good security is all about comprehensive threat assessment and balanced risk management, not the elimination of every conceivable risk. Terrorists measure their success by how much we over react to their provocations. Aviation security is a collective responsibility and requires effective consultation to ensure security measures are practical, cost effective and sustainable."

See also: Video Interview with the CEO of Qatar Airways as a very interesting part of the interview covers airline security.

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American Airlines Response to Orbitz and Travelport

PR Newswire
United Business Media

FORT WORTH, Texas, Nov. 4, 2010 /PRNewswire via COMTEX/ -- Customers still can compare fares and purchase tickets for travel on American Airlines on Orbitz and Orbitz-powered sites today, and we will continue to negotiate in good faith to reach a viable, mutually beneficial agreement with Orbitz. AA's position remains that our distribution channels need to be cost-effective and efficient while also enabling more choices for customers through new products/service offerings.

American Airlines can deliver more customized and relevant products and services to our customers through our travel partners, but we must look beyond the current paradigm to succeed in this quest. Products and services in air travel continue to evolve as airlines distinguish themselves from one another and the same must be true for how products are distributed. This is an opportunity for our travel agency partners to distinguish themselves from their competition and better serve our joint customers.

About American Airlines

American Airlines, American Eagle and AmericanConnection(R) serve 250 cities in 40 countries with, on average, more than 3,400 daily flights. The combined network fleet numbers more than 900 aircraft. American's award-winning website, AA.com(R), provides users with easy access to check and book fares, plus personalized news, information and travel offers. American Airlines is a founding member of the oneworld(R) Alliance, which brings together some of the best and biggest names in the airline business, enabling them to offer their customers more services and benefits than any airline can provide on its own. Together, its members serve nearly 700 destinations in more than 130 countries and territories. American Airlines, Inc. and American Eagle Airlines, Inc. are subsidiaries of AMR Corporation. AmericanAirlines, American Eagle, AmericanConnection, AA.com, We know why you fly and AAdvantage are trademarks of American Airlines, Inc. /quotes/comstock/13*!amr/quotes/nls/amr (AMR **8.34**, -0.03, -0.36%)

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Orbitz: AA Decision 'First Salvo' In 'Broad Attack'

The Beat ~ a travel business newsletter
Danbury, Conn.
11/4/10 10:51 AM

Orbitz Worldwide CEO Barney Harford today told analysts that American Airlines' decision to terminate its relationship with Orbitz represents the "first salvo" in a "broad attack ... on the travel distribution landscape," including global distribution systems and "agencies in general." Though he said Orbitz is not privy to AA's relationships with other online agencies, Harford indicated a belief that others would be impacted, as well.

American Airlines informed Orbitz Worldwide that it would "terminate the company's authority to ticket AA flights on its Orbitz. com and Orbitz for Business Web sites" as of Dec. 1.

"AA has publicly expressed its intention to force agencies to connect directly to its systems in order to access its content," Harford said. "A number of business travel and consumer advocacy organizations have criticized American's effort, and we join then in that criticism. By taking this action, American is attempting to limit travelers' choices where they can least afford it.

"Orbitz is working actively to resolve this issue to the benefit of our mutual customers," Harford added.

Orbitz executives would not detail the expected financial impact of AA's decision, and Harford said "there is no reason to believe other airlines are pursuing a direct-connect strategy the way American clearly is at this stage."

An American Airlines official provided the following statement regarding the carrier's decision. "For now, customers still can compare and purchase American's fares on Orbitz and Orbitz-powered sites. American values its long-standing relationship with Orbitz and desires an agreement that works for both parties. We continue to negotiate in good faith to reach a viable, mutually beneficial agreement with Orbitz. We believe it is important that our distribution channels be cost-effective and efficient. Consumers benefit when inefficiencies in the travel distribution marketplace are addressed."

When asked by email if AA has made similar decisions regarding other online distributors, AA manager of merchandising strategy Cory Garner wrote, "We're going to stick to our holding statement for now."

Orbitz Worldwide's stock price at press time was off about 11 percent at $6.06 per share.

~ David Jonas

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AA Dumping Orbitz

November 4, 2010 7:30 am ~ New York City

American Airlines has informed Orbitz Worldwide that it would "terminate the company's authority to ticket AA flights on its Orbitz.com and Orbitz for Business Web sites" as of Dec. 1, according to an Orbitz filing with the Securities and Exchange Commission.

The two parties were operating under an agreement signed in 2003 that was set to expire in 2013.

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"The agreement sets forth the terms under which Orbitz can offer air travel on behalf of AA to consumers and requires AA to provide the company with agreed-upon transaction payments when consumers book this travel," according to the filing. "The agreement also provides Orbitz with nondiscriminatory access to seat availability for published fares as well as marketing and promotional support. In exchange for this information and support, the company pays AA a portion of the global distribution system fees that the company receives from the GDS for AA transactions booked on the Orbitz.com and Orbitz for Business Web sites.

"AA also exercised its right to terminate the Supplier Link Agreement that it entered into with Orbitz in February 2004," the filing stated. "The Supplier Link Agreement establishes a direct link between Orbitz.com and AA's internal reservation systems and requires that Orbitz book certain airline tickets through that direct link rather than through a GDS. In return, AA pays Orbitz a per ticket fee. The termination of the Supplier Link Agreement will also be

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effective as of December 1, 2010."

Orbitz later this morning is due to hold a conference call with analysts, ostensibly to discuss its third-quarter performance, which included a $15 million net profit and 32 percent year over year gross bookings volume growth at Orbitz for Business.

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~ Jay Campbell

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