OTA

The OpenTravel™ Alliance

Project Team /Study Proposal Document

Hospitality Open Standard Identification Codes for the Tourist Industry

Version 8.0

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1. Proposed Project Team / Study Name

Project Name: Hospitality Open Standard Identification Codes

2. Description

Unique identifiers are critical in this industry and facilitate the flow of information that supports the demand-supply equation of the hospitality industry through the entire life-cycle of transactions and stays. Reservations, commission processing, reconciliation are all functions in this industry that require such unique identifiers.

Currently there is no world wide identification standard that can uniquely identify and provide information about entities within the hospitality industry. There are however several proprietary means that attempt to do this. Until recently IATA (International Air Transport Association) had been the most accepted organization that provided within reason (in terms of content, price, updates, etc) a travel agency database. There are no companies or agencies that provide this service for hotels, central reservation systems, cruises companies, commission payment systems, tour operators, etc.

We wish to propose a world wide standardization project to develop and deploy a unique identification solution for the hospitality industry. This solution would include the design of an alpha numerical sequence (similar to that as currently provided by some organizations) as well as a system that supports allocating and maintain such identifiers to the industry community.

Such a solution would allow for the free exchange of information and add value for the increased flow of trade and revenue on a global basis. The hospitality industry should not be dependent on the solutions or policies of a single company or agency. Due to the fact that the vast majority of the industry has grown dependent on one company with a proprietary solution; the “new” unique identifiers will need to be introduced into the industry with as little disruption to the end users as to gain acceptance swiftly.

2.1 Purpose

Each unique entity within the hospitality industry are notably affected by the current situation today in that that there is no unique global identifier (UGI). The lack of unique global identifiers (UGIs) causes problems during the integration of information throughout the supply chain. This includeds suppliers, intermediaries and ultimately the end-users.

The below table outlines specific examples of the adverse affects that currently exist within the industry and the business drivers for UGIs (Unique Global Identifiers).

Hotel
Summary: There are at least 300,000 hotels globally, distributed through a variety of

intermediaries. A hotel can be independent or part of a hotel group such as chains, franchises, hotel consortia, etc.

Background: Each system within the supply chain has it's own method of identifying hotels. There is no common or unique way to identify hotels. For example these two hotels have the following identifiers associates with them:

Intermediaries	Park Hyatt Chicago	Treasure Island Resort
Supplier Database	CHIPH	XXXXX
Amadeus	HY CHIHPK	UI DABDAT
Galileo	HY 00935	UI 13488
Sabre	HY 00935	UI 47381
Worldspan	HY CHIPH	UI 60608
Pegasus – Financial Svc	HY CHIPH	OR 060608
Pegasus – ODD	HY 00935	UI 29076
WorldRes	52739	21269
HRN		DAB TREA
Utell		060608
FEMA	1763	FL3970
AH & MA		103984
Leonardo	H1ELA	H0P7P
Northstar Travel Media	083119	068705
4oceans	125877	147316

Business Drivers for Unique Global Identifiers:

- Open architecture technology allows systems to more easily connect and talk with each other reducing the amount of translations
- Medium- and long-term development costs would reduce as fewer variants need to be accommodated
- Information exchange would happen quicker
- Queries would get resolved quicker between two entities

On-Line Travel Sites (Non-Booking)

Summary: In order to accommodate the various product groups and internal users of a online travel media sites unique, un-changing, property identifier is essential. One that stays with a property regardless of property ownership or brand affiliation.

Background: On-line (non-booking) travel sites have not had the focus of data standards put upon them, as the only consistent effort in standardization has been in the transaction record identifier. Whilst even this booking identifier has resulted in a number of variations, the non-booking sites have had little to no guidelines proposed or adopted

Business Drivers for Unique Global Identifiers:

- UGIs would save time and money during matching and loading of data from hotel companies into the hotel chain database
- UGI´s would save time and money during matching and linking images from media companies to the hotel chain database.
- UGIs matching hotels from agencies like FEMA and GSA so that hotels that meet government travelers requirements could be identified.

On-Line Booking Sites

Summary: Similar to GDS,s the various on-line booking sites are creating non-standard unique identifiers within their proprietary systems to identify hotels and travel agents. There are multitudes of different business models within this arena that also adds to the complexity.

Background: The open environment of on-line retailers and growth spurts in this area has led to organic and chaotic growth, with no guidelines for each new entrant to follow

Business Drivers for Unique Global Identifiers:

- UGIs will eliminate the current static data mapping that occurs for a on-line booking engine to map to identify a specific hotel site.
- UGI´s will allow for a flow of information linking all entities involved in the booking process and allow for improved intermediaries and ultimate-buyer confidence.
- In a similar fashion UGI´s will allow for the backend payment systems or services to greatly reduce the payment cycles between suppliers and consumers.
- UGI's would allow easier reporting and tracking on source of business

GDSs

Summary: GDS identifiers have been restricted to only a few codes, which enabled users to identify the booking source. As GDS have grown in complexity and number these codes are in need of updating

Background: GDS codes were used for the traditional GDS, and although the GDS had variations within themselves (e.g. 1G and UA, 1A and 1S), this was fairly controlled. The big question now is "what is a GDS?" Identifiers may now need to be applied to switch companies as well as the GDS New Entrants (GNE's) – therefore underlining the need to apply a guideline standard for users to identify source of bookings

Intermediaries	**Amadeus**	**Sabre**
Travel Agents	E1F	P3AX

Business Drivers for Unique Global Identifiers:

- UGIs would eliminate confusion, duplication and errors. Particularly for switchovers of property branding and/or during any commercial agreement between distributors of hotel content.
- Not having UGIs greatly limits database queries.
- Not having UGIs complicate and prolongs the switch over procedure. UGIs would allow for switchover procedures to be simplified into one identical message to all channels
- UGIs would reduce the internally costs of mapping all these proprietary identifiers to each other.

Commission Processing Companies

Summary: Commission Processing Companies provide services to the multitudes of intermediaries involved in commission payments. The most generic example is between a commission payment from a hotel for a client's stay to the travel agent that booked that reservation. This generic example can extrapolated in an unlimited number of examples.

Background: Every entity involved in providing commission payments carries out the strenuous activity of maintaining current and active information about both the payer and payee. This is a global effort and one that has required a lot of internal resources to maintain the integrity of the data. Below is a example table showing where an IATA number is re-used.

Intermediaries	**TA Ultra Montes**	**TA 2B A Traveler**
IATA – 2004	96032882	
IATA – 2005		96032882

Business Drivers for Unique Global Identifiers:

- Industry standards UGI´s provide business rules and numbering algorithms that would not allow for the reuse of IDs.
- UGIs will eliminate a current cost associated with pseudo-unique travel agent identifiers from such accreditation companies as IATA, TIDS, ARC, TSI and CLIA.
- UGIs will eliminate the current static data mapping between the different travel agent accreditation companies, hotel identifies provided from GDSs and other like non-UGI´s numbering systems.
- UGI´s built on the principles of open standards will allow for a non discriminatory and free exchange of information that includes all entities of the travel industry.

Travel Agents (TA)

Summary: In very general terms we can say that travel agents provide the service of selling or arranging trips or tours for customers.

Background: This industry has changed radically in the past few years, and will continue to change as immerging technologies and innovation is applied to meet the demands of travelers around the world. There are many accreditation and professional associations each providing their own unique identifiers for travel agents. This area of the industry is also one which continues to change and evolve as Travel Management Companies change their size, allegiances, direction, and scope.

Intermediaries		
Pegasus		
WPS		
Tacsnet		
Online booking engines		
Travel Search Engines		
CSR		
IATAN	Internacional Airlines Travel Agent Network	
CLIA	Cruise Line Internacional Association	
TIDS	Travel Industry Designator Service for Europe, Middle East and Africa.	
ARC	Airlines Reporting Corporation 8 digit number	ARC-accredited travel agency allows TAs to print airline tickets.
TSI	Travel Sails Intermediary Agency * TSI agencies must demonstrate that they produce at least $200,000 in gross travel sales or $20,000 in gross travel income in a twelve month period, have an Errors & Omissions insurance policy in an appropriate amount, and meet certain other business and licensing requirements.	IATAN recognized the importance of the changes taking place within the industry and the growing trend of home based agencies. TSI agencies sell travel and travel related services but do not have airline appointments or issue airline tickets.
ASTA	Airlines Travel Agent Network	

Business Drivers for Unique Global Identifiers:

- UGIs will eliminate the current static data mapping that occurs for a on-line booking engine to map to identify a specific hotel site.
- UGI´s will allow for a flow of information linking all entities involved in the booking process and allow for improved intermediaries and ultimate-buyer confidence.
- In a similar fashion UGI´s will allow for the backend payment systems or services to greatly reduce the payment cycles between suppliers and consumers.
- UGI's would allow easier reporting and tracking on source of business

2.2 Scope

We would like to develop an open standard numbering system and process that could be used world wide in a manner that supports all sides of the reservation flow process both pre-stay, during-stay, and post-stay activities and which would thus allow for the increased trade, revenue and harmonization of the reservation processing functions, and eventually become the identification standard for the industry.

To maintain scope and project manageability, entities within the industry have been divided into two groups. Group A are the entities that are required for this project. Group B are other travel related entities that will highly benefit from the results of this project, but will not be directly included into this work group. However, all attempts during this initial project will be to include requirements of Group B so that the end result will truly be a global solution that can address all entities within the travel industry.

This prioritization would allow the project to move forward and reap benefits from the priority entities, which in turn would generate interest and momentum to complete the group B entities.
(NB. This priority may be subject to minor changes from the membership during the standards committee review)

Group A	
Travel Agents	On-line or off-line retailers and TMC's
Hotels	Hotel accommodation suppliers
Online Booking Engines	Internet sites providing secure online reservations systems to intermediaries (travel search engines) and the ultimate buyer (the public)
Commission Processing Service Companies	A type of clearinghouse that track and consolidate commissions due to travel agents from multiple hotels and provide single payments in local currency accompanies by detailed activity statements. Ex. Pegasus, WPS, TACS.
GDSs	Computerized reservation networks through which travel entities – travel agents, airline employees or travellers – view data on a wide range of travels services, including air, hotel, auto rental and like services. Example: Amadeus, Galileo, Sabre, Worldspan.
Central Reservations Systems (CRS)	Core systems used by hotel, airline, care and other suppliers to centrally manage reservations from various sales channels.
Property Management Systems (PMS)	Computer systems in a hotel which contains information about available and occupied guestrooms, future reservations and guest charges.
Switch Companies	Provide communication connections, data communication and data reformatting services connecting a hotel chain, representation companies and consortia reservation systems to each of the GDSs . Examples: Pegasus Solutions & WizCom*

Group B	
Air	Air transport providers (airlines)
Car	Car hire companies
Tour operators	Wholesale travel agents who provide combined travel packages including such items as air, hotel, car, excursions,

	etc.
Travel Software Companies	Industry-related entities that may or may not be involved in the reservation process, but who figure by providing a function of support or process to a hotel function (e.g. content supplies, brochure suppliers, translation services)
Representation Companies	An organization that provides reservation services, including processing of voice reservation requests and/or GDS connectivity for hotels or small hotel companies that prefer not to operate these services and systems themselves.
Travel Search Engines	A site or service that searches a range of other travel sites or search engines for the best price or value for a travel product or a customer.
Third Party Service Providers	Provides private label services – processing of voice reservation requests, GDS connectivity or data processing services for hotel companies which prefer not to operate these services and systems themselves. Examples: VIP International, Lexington, Unirez & Trust International.*
Next Generation GDSs	

* The GDS Trainer´s Guide HEDNA 2002

The creation of this standard and the method to maintain it would entail the following

- Free access to the data for all new requests, updates and modifications in an easy, secure fashion.
- Free, or a nominal fee, for access to the data
- Design of an alpha-numeric sequence that encompass current and future needs, as close to existing industry standards, as to create as little change as possible to legacy systems in the industry.
- Design of required and optional accompanying information such as address, phone, email, fax, contact, etc.
- Communication and reach out to the hospitality industry for support and adoption of the new standard.

This project will be divided into two phases: Naming Convention Standard White Paper and Distribution Platform. The below table highlights significant milestones that are included in each phase of the project.

Phase A: Naming Convention Standard White Paper
This paper will review the business case and detail the recommended solution. It will include a deployment plan outlining the next steps needed to develop, release and maintain the solution to be implemented in phase two. *(Below outlines what will be covered in this white paper)*
Environment, Current Processes and Business Case for UGIs. • This is somewhat currently briefed in section 2.1 of this proposal
Objectives • The personal perspective: Actors (Human) and their Roles and Responsibilities o Access Control o Distribution of Data • The technical perspective: Actors (Computers) and their Roles and Responsibilities

○ Service oriented architecture ○ Seamless – open standard exchange of information • The legal perspective: Compliance with Legislation ○ Security • Assessment overview of adoption impact and barriers to adoption
Unique Global Identification Code • Algorithm to create unique ID ○ Never re-usable • Examples of Required Input Fields ○ Legal Name of Entity ○ Commercial Name ○ Location Address (Street, City, State, Country, Zip) ○ Mailing Address (Street, City, State, Country, Zip) ○ E-mail ○ Telephone Number ○ Fax Number ○ Method of payment (Bank Transfer, VIA, etc …) * nominal fee paid to global non-profit organization responsible for creation and maintenance of UGIs. ○ Etc …. • Examples of Optional Input Fields ○ Web page ○ Etc …. •
Distribution Platform Requirements ○ Guidelines ○ Service Levels ○ Business Process ○ Data refresh / update requirements • Technical Process ○ Incident-Problem-Change management ○ Release management • Technology Model ○ Build upon open standards principles of availability; maximize end-user choice, no royalty, no discrimination, extension or subset, predatory practices. ○ built upon Open Standards XML (*May need to enhance current OTA XML schema) ○ One single repository ○ Web site registration, updates, bulk upload-downloads ○ Real-time • Ease of Management • Ease of Use
Distribution Platform Providers • Research and Identify potential suitable global non-profit organization to take responsibility for the creation and maintenance of these unique global identifiers

Phase B: Distribution Platform
This is the actual implementation phase of what was designed in the white paper. *(Below outlines what will occur during this phase)*
• Create a request for proposal (RFP) and submit to the defined organization listed in Phase A of this project to take responsibility for the creation and maintenance of these unique identifiers • Create a Project Plan & Implement the solution using the below phases. ○ Initiation Phase

○ Design Phase ○ Development Phase ○ Build Phase ○ Test Phase ○ Implementation Phase ○ Support Phase

2.3 Goal

The standardization and free exchange of identification codes within the hospitality industry creating the preferred industry identification method.

3. Initial Contributions

Document name	Type of Document	Document Source
About Open Standard Identification Codes in the Tourist Industry	Word	Worldwide Payment Systems

4. Resource Requirements

Although ultimately we will be requesting that a nominated/selected company or organization would be in charge of the creation, management and maintenance of this alternative data base, this will come at a later stage once the industry has proposed the solution that best fits its requirements. In doing so it will have also gathered support for the implementation and adoption of such a scheme. We believe that this would give a very positive image to the project and allow for its acceptance and success in the hospitality industry.

[Check each activity required.]

Minute taking	X
Facilitation	X
List other activities	

[Fill-in the anticipated time commitments of each of the activities in the table below. The specification manager should help with these time estimates.]

Planned activity	Number per month	Number of months	Duration (hrs)	Total Time (hrs)
Conference calls				
Face to face meetings				

[To be completed by spec manager.]

Total Spec Manager time required for this project.	

5. Anticipated Completion Date

Study completion date	Third Quarter

6. Sponsoring Member /Work Group/ Sub-Committee

This initial white paper has been submitted by members of OTA and HEDNA working groups.

At a minimum, the following members/companies will participate in this multi-association workgroup to complete the proposed project, following their volunteering during the December 2005 committee meeting, and some subsequent conversations.

Member	Company	E-Mail Address
Karen Harenza	Hyatt Hotels	Karen.harenza@hyattintl.com
Linda Kent	Starwood	Linda.kent@starwoodhotels.com
Valyn Perini	OTA	Valyn.perini@opentravel.org
Gautam Lulla	Amadeus	glulla@amadeus.net
Marion Hughes	Openworld	mhughes@openworld.org
Sean Datcher	Sabre	Sean.datcher@sabre.net
Roland Tanner	Lanyon	Roland.tanner@lanyon.com
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Don Smith	Sidestep	dsmith@sidestep.com
Matt Barnes Jennifer Buckley	Pegasus	Matthew.barnes@pegs.com Jennifer.buckley@pegs.com
Laury Anne Behrens Jose Luis Acedo	WPS	lab@wpsnetwork.com jlacedo@wpsnetwork.com

Mail distribution list required?	Yes
Please provide the name of the mail distribution list:	HOSIC Group (Hospitality Open Standard Identification Codes)

7. Deliverable Schedule and Next Steps

Component	Status	Estimated Completion Date
Review and construction of discussion paper	Completed	20th Jan 2006
Submission and support of HEDNA board	Completed	3rd Feb 2006

Feedback from HEDNA board	Pending	
Feedback from HEDNA standards committee via conference call	Pending	April 2006
Press release by HEDNA announcing the desire to create this proposal and encourage adoption	Pending	April 2006
Construction of proposal document	Pending	May 2006
OTA acceptance to review request	Pending	Release A? or B - tbd
OTA / HEDNA / HTNG Endorsement of proposal		TBD