

QUICK TAKES

Attorney defends

Orbitz, the proposed airline-owned Web site that's set to launch in June, has been labeled anticompetitive by ASTA, Travelocity and other on-line ticket sellers, and the Justice Department has been reviewing Orbitz's business plan for several months.

But the site got some good news recently when Sen. Mike DeWine (R-Ohio), chairman of the Senate antitrust subcommittee, sent a letter to the DOJ urging it to expedite its review, saying, "Orbitz will likely provide several benefits to consumers," even though "certain aspects of Orbitz raise competition concerns."



Doernhoefer

Who's right? We asked Gary Doernhoefer, Orbitz's vice president and general counsel, if it is in the best interest of travel agents to work with Orbitz to challenge the CRSs that oppose it.

TW: Why did you lobby Sen. DeWine to write a letter to the DOJ?

Doernhoefer: The regulatory review isn't moving fast enough. I want it done. I want resources devoted to it. I want the Justice Department to get going.

TW: Orbitz plans to launch in June even without DOJ approval. So why are you pushing to get it?

Doernhoefer: The longer this regulatory review sits out there, I am a sitting duck for the lobbying efforts of my competitors.

If the Justice Department were to announce that it is satisfied with Orbitz, then no member of Congress will be particularly interested anymore.



Tips for honeymooners

DOC IN A BOX

Q We have lots of couples planning honeymoon vacations this spring with destinations ranging from Antigua to Africa. What health precautions do you suggest?

A I encourage future brides and grooms to get a physical from their primary health-care providers a few months before wedding. The anticipa-

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tion, and, in some cases, stress leading up to the wedding can take its toll on the body.

A routine physical can help ensure that both parties are feeling their best for the big day and throughout the honeymoon.

Second, I recommend that each couple visit a travel medicine specialist a month or two before their honeymoon.

Although primary-care physicians usually can provide some vaccines and some travel-related health information, they often do not have the latest vaccines or the most up-to-date information on destination-specific health risks.

Further, because travel medicine specialists really do specialize in health issues related to travel, they can provide care tailored to each individual's medical history and

his/her travel itinerary, including which vaccinations are "routine," "required" and "recommended" for a particular destination.

A good list of travel medicine specialists is available from the International Society of Travel Medicine Web site at www.isitm.org.

Third, a preventive trip to the dentist prior to the wedding may be a good idea since a toothache could be bad for a honeymoon.

This is particularly important for those traveling to less-developed areas of the world, where emergency dental assistance may be hard to come by and below the typical standard of care found in the U.S.

Once the prewedding medical visits are out of the way, couples can turn their attention to the packing. Whether planning to spend their days on the beach in Antigua or on a safari in Africa, one of the most important items is sunscreen, as sunburn/sun poisoning are among the most common ailments affecting honeymooners.

An ample supply of a sunscreen with an SPF (sun-protective factor) of 15 or higher will work for most people, while fair-skinned individuals prone to burning should use SPF 25 or 30. A protective lip balm and a wide-brimmed hat also will help minimize the effects of the sun's harmful UVB rays.

Travelers' diarrhea also is a major complaint of honeymooners, particularly those traveling to developing countries.

A travel medicine specialist can provide detailed information as well as medications for preventing and treating travelers' diarrhea.

As a general guideline, however, travelers to less-developed parts of the world should drink bottled water and avoid ice, salads, prepared buffets, raw (or undercooked) meats, seafood and raw fruits and vegetables.

Other health precautions depending on the destination include:

- Using insect repellent or insecticide and/or wearing long-sleeved shirts and pants to prevent insect bites.
- Avoiding walking barefoot, particularly in the tropics.
- Drinking plenty of (bottled) water and other fluids to prevent heat exhaustion.
- Wearing cool, light-colored clothing made of porous fabrics like cotton to allow adequate ventilation and prevent prickly heat rash.

And, as mentioned above, ensuring that all required vaccinations are up to date and checking with a health-care provider or a travel medicine specialist regarding recommended immunizations and medications to prevent hepatitis A, hepatitis B, malaria, typhoid fever and other infectious diseases.

Finally, honeymooners who are not quite ready to add another member to their family should bring along an adequate means of birth control.

Finally, it is important to remember to carry medications and other vital items in a carry-on bag, not checked luggage.

This column is designed to answer agent questions of general interest to the travel. Please address your questions to Dr. Connor at bconnor@pol.net.



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