

OpenTravel Alliance Announces New Project Teams

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Air Canada, Amadeus, Starwood Lead New Work

The OpenTravel Alliance (OpenTravel), the travel industry's leading distribution standards development organization, announced nine project teams set for the second half of 2008, dedicated to solving travel distribution business problems with XML schema.

'Standards become even more important in an economic downturn,' said Valyn Perini, executive director of OpenTravel. 'Travel companies must ensure their inventory is available wherever their customers want to book, and must do so while keeping costs down. Robust and reusable standards are the most effective solution for both those business issues.'

The work undertaken by these project teams ranges from content distribution for hotels and cruise lines to dynamic packaging messages for every travel segment, to unbundled selling for airlines, a project led by Air Canada.

'Air Canada believes open XML standards are critical to the technical advancement of airline distribution,' said Graham Wareham, General Manager Product Distribution for Air Canada. 'Because OpenTravel's standards are so widely adopted, we can now forge new commercial partnerships with enhanced distribution of our products and services. The ability to generate ancillary revenues through channels beyond our own website is key to our distribution strategy. The project Air Canada is leading will address the ability to offer additional services and discount options to the air traveler at time of reservation and to properly display these options at various points of a booking process.'

Other projects underway include:

Enhanced content distribution messages to better control the distribution and management of digital assets and other rich media, led by Starwood Hotels & Resorts

Adding additional elements to existing rental car messages to accommodate insurance rentals and to provide this information back to the insurance companies, led by Hertz

Creating dynamic packaging XML messages that consist of a hotel, car, and/or air component in a single transaction between the supplier and a trading partner, led by US Airways

Enhancing the current OpenTravel customer profile messages and extend the messages to handle advanced search. New schemas will be developed to handle merge operations, led by Amadeus

Creating a new schema to communicate an event's actual history, including meeting room setup needs, audiovisual needs, catering needs, safety and security needs, led by APEX.

In addition, the following projects are active in the Architecture Work Group:

Creating An OpenTravel Data Dictionary

Namespace Usage In OpenTravel Schemas

PCI-PII And Remediation Study

Upcoming OpenTravel Activities

The first of OpenTravel's two Advisory Forums in 2009 will be held in Seattle, Washington April 22-29, 2009. For the first time, OpenTravel will hold an Advisory Forum in Europe in the fall of 2009. The location and date will be announced later this year.

About the OpenTravel Alliance

The OpenTravel Alliance is passionate about solving the problems inherent with connecting multiple systems within the complex travel distribution arena.

OpenTravel's mission is to engineer specifications that make data transmission flow smoothly throughout travel, tourism and hospitality. OpenTravel creates, expands and drives adoption of open universal data specifications, including but not limited to the use of XML, for the electronic exchange of business information among all sectors of the travel industry.

With a diversified membership representing influential names in all sectors of the travel industry, OpenTravel is comprised of representatives from airlines, car rental firms, hotels, cruise lines, leisure suppliers, service providers, tour operators, travel agencies, and trade associations. Thousands of OpenTravel message structures are in use, carrying tens of millions of messages between trading partners every day.

For more information, visit www.opentravel.org.

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