

## Whole Travel Launches Rating System To Keep Eco-Friendly Hotels Honest

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The 'green' incarnation of travel, called ecotourism, mandates that travelers minimize their cultural, economic, and environmental impacts as much as possible to promote sustainability. But while there are thousands of hotels worldwide that promote themselves as 'green', many of them are only partially fulfilling these requirements - they might not be wasting energy, but are paying locals at near-slave wages, or funneling money out of the local economy.

Whole Travel, a new site that launches tonight, is looking to keep these hotels honest while promoting the concept of sustainable travel. The site assigns each hotel with a score based on its environmental, cultural, and economic impacts, as well as its "customer interaction", or how well it teaches visitors about the issues that affect their destination.

To receive a score, hotels first self-assign a rating based on how well they think they fare in each category. Whole Travel CEO Matthew Davies acknowledges that these scores will be biased, but believes that submitting a misleading score would actually hurt hotels in the long run, as readers of the site would be able to tag them as dishonest and discourage prospective customers. However, the site isn't relying on good faith alone - it is also working with local non-profits around the world to verify rating for hotels in their regions. The site is also working with international non-profits like Sustainable Travel International, which has similar goals but is based on a "badge" system that hotels need to pay for to become accredited as Green.

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