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The evolution of booking your travel by [ChristineJohnson](#)

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We all remember the days when we needed to book a flight or hotel we would have to march into the bricks and mortar type travel agency to communicate our travel requirements or dream vacation and have the travel agent provide their recommendations along with options and pricing. This used to work out fine with the airline or hotel paying commissions to the travel agent (although some might suggest this was a conflict of interest when the agent entices you to take a flight or stay at the hotel where commission rates are higher). However, over the past 18 years, these commissions have been shifted onto the consumer – so you will pay more using the traditional bricks and mortar travel agency.

Then came along the ability to book directly on hotel and airline sites, these proprietary sites were built for one purpose only – to entice you to book directly with them without comparing any other options – assuring you the lowest rates. I would be stating the obvious to say these sites aren't going to show the price of another comparable carrier or hotel offering the same flight/hotel for 20% – 80% less – that certainly wouldn't be a good business model for them. Now, you can search through the hundreds of sites out there yourself to compare options – but the information overload and hours you would have to spend doing this make it not a viable option for everyone.

Today – we have options which put the choices available back into our hands. The most popular and sensible way to book your online travel is to use a search aggregator site. These sites essentially data mine the hundreds of websites out on the web and consolidate all the results into an independent and unbiased display for you to choose. Along with displaying prices and options, these sites also offer ratings based on user reviews and direct links to those reviews so you can read what other travellers have experienced. Now, having said how great search aggregator sites are, you need to realize that they are not all built equal or have the same business model. Some of these sites only search the many carrier and hotel sites to provide you with a price comparison; while others search the carrier, hotel AND the other aggregator sites to truly provide you with the best prices and options – these are the sites that are recommended. Now, the question you may have is how do I know what sites a search aggregator is providing me results for – look around their site and see if they tell you what they are searching. If not, the results from a search should display the source – if it shows results for some of the other aggregator sites out there – then you'll know if you are truly getting an unbiased display of all prices and options available.

Remember, do your research before doing your search and you'll be sure to get the best deals out there booking online.

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