

T2RL'S First View is our rapid analysis of breaking news. It helps provide perspective, putting the facts in the context of our wider and deeper knowledge of the market.

## Amadeus Delivers a New Generation Self-Booking Tool

T2R Staff

### The Facts

At the Travel Technology Europe 2011 show held in London last week several exhibitors were showing mobile technologies. However the most highly-developed use of a mobile platform came from Traveltainment, the leisure travel operation of Amadeus, based in Germany. It has developed a dedicated iPad app that provides a sophisticated interface with back-end booking systems and Web resources to create an immersive user experience for travel management.

### The Analysis

There are many organisations engaged in the development of travel applications for the iPad but Traveltainment's app is breaking new ground for a number of reasons.

- It is a dedicated iPad app that makes use of the much greater screen space than the iPhone together with its multimedia capabilities
- It is specific to the iPad so it is able to maximise its use of the specific hardware capabilities of the device, unlike a browser-based application that must burn cycles determining the hardware it has available and then only be able to use the subset common to all devices.
- It pulls Web content directly into the app and aggregates different sources within the iPad rather than using a back-end server to assemble its displays at the cost of increased latency

The following screen shots give an indication of the app's capabilities.

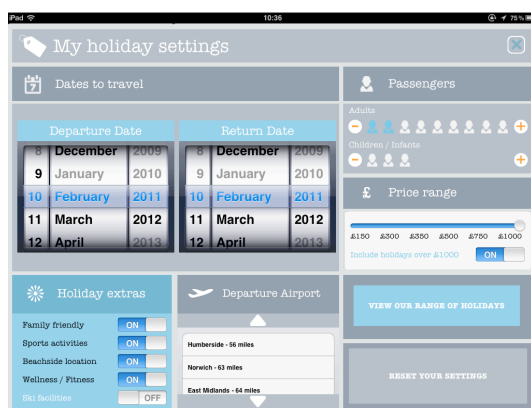


Figure 1 : A Parameter-driven search input

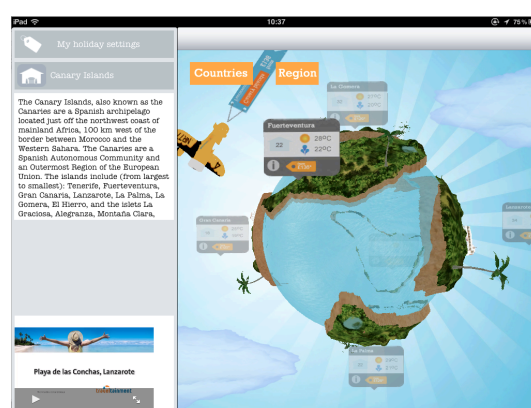


Figure 2 : A Graphics-driven geographical search incorporating live data from Google maps and weather

The app currently connects to the Traveltainment search engine but it is also intended for use with other online search facilities that provide a well-documented API. Traveltainment has built it to be offered as a white-label product for use by online travel agents and tour operators.

The company says that it has an Android version in development but cautions that Android will suffer some of the same challenges as a browser-based application. This is because Android is used on a variety of platforms with different capabilities. For example the current iPad app makes extensive use of the tablet's 3-D graphics and video playback capabilities, neither of which is guaranteed to be present on any particular Android device.

## The Speculation

It's early days for iPad as a consumer facing booking device. Although its browser can access any online booking site on the World Wide Web the real advances will come with applications that harness the iPad's capabilities directly. Traveltainment will have a first-mover advantage but in the world of consumer electronics that will last for no more than a few months.

This is an example of a general trend in which the travel industry is no longer standing apart from the IT mainstream but making good use of the enormous ecosystem that has formed around popular consumer platforms. Simply put, there are many tens of thousands of developers capable of producing iPad applications and provided the principals in the industry deploy systems with effective APIs many of them will turn their talents to travel apps. Recently we saw SITA deploy an iPad based check-in kiosk for Malaysia Airlines that was developed in days and operational within weeks. We expect this to become a typical example of the development cycles possible by tapping into the consumer market.

It is probable that Traveltainment will have success selling its app as a white label product. If it is to maintain its position it will have to continue investing in further developments of software products that are startling in their new capabilities. Because if it doesn't someone else surely will.