Online Privacy: An Analysis of Global Hotel Chain Data Collection and Privacy Disclosure Practices

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Abstract

Websites employ increasingly sophisticated monitoring technologies to track what pages visitors view, using the resulting insights to improve both customer experience and targeted marketing efforts. Whilst hotels have traditionally collected large amounts of customer data through loyalty or rewards programs, little is known about their use of online monitoring techniques. This study establishes current practices amongst the top 50 hotel brands, examining their use of online monitoring tools; establishing how (and whether) they reveal such monitoring to visitors; and assessing whether their practices and disclosures comply with the EU General Data Protection Regulation 2016. Findings reveal that all chains use some form of monitoring technology on their brand website. While the majority include at least some form of disclosure statement, most do not comply with current legislative requirements, leaving hotel chains open to the threat of legal sanction.

Keywords: *Privacy; GDPR; Hotels*

Track: Tourism Marketing