



## Hotwire

“SITA Passenger and Travel Solutions<sup>1</sup> provided us with a ready-to-go solution to our information retrieval problems. They essentially handed us a universal translator for CRSs and airline systems.”

Al Pappas, CIO, Hotwire

Hotwire ([www.hotwire.com](http://www.hotwire.com)) is a leading discount travel site where flexibility means savings for leisure travellers. By only partnering with trusted travel brands, Hotwire allows budget travellers to buy higher quality travel for a lower price. It works because Hotwire matches the needs of two groups: customers who can be flexible about their choice of airline, hotel and rental car company in order to save money, and suppliers who have excess seats, rooms and cars they want to fill.

Hotwire works with 33 international and domestic airlines including founding partners: American Airlines, America West, Continental, Northwest, United and US Airways. In addition, Hotwire is partnered with more than 6,000 top hotels in 250 US and Caribbean destinations, and several major car rental companies. Hotwire is a private corporation based in San Francisco, California. The company launched its services in October 2000, with investments from the Texas Pacific Group and six major airlines.

### The challenge

When Hotwire was formed in early 2000, it was faced with the fact that other online travel vendors were already fully operational with developed sites and brands. Hotwire needed to launch the website quickly and with the highest levels of functionality, speed, and reliability. Hotwire also needed this site to connect directly with a CRS and a variety of partner airline reservation systems.

### The approach and delivery

Hotwire engaged SITA Passenger and Travel Solutions to provide subject matter expertise, technical expertise on CRS and airline host connectivity, and software integration services. In addition to their consulting capabilities, SITA also provided Hotwire with their product SITA Integration Platform (formerly known as Runway), as an off-the-shelf solution to the critical issue of communicating with CRSs and airline systems.

Hotwire allows budget travelers to buy higher quality travel for a lower price

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<sup>1</sup> SITA Passenger and Travel Solutions acquired Eland Technologies.

By using SITA Integration Platform, Hotwire had the ability to choose from all the major CRSs because they did not have to worry about which CRS had the best interface to the systems they were planning to build.



Hotwire is now the fourth most-visited travel site, with more than 14 million registered users.

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SITA Integration Platform, the high-performance, high-availability server, sits between the mainframe systems that house fares and schedules and the software that is seen by the end-user. It takes a request from the user's system (such as itinerary display for a trip), converts that request into a language that is understood by the CRS, waits for the response and then converts that response into a universal language (XML) that is understood by all modern software packages.

The interface allows third party developers writing the business software to ignore the intricacies of getting information from mainframe systems and to focus on building an application that sells travel.

By using SITA Integration Platform, Hotwire had the ability to choose from all the major CRSs because they did not have to worry about which CRS had the best interface to the systems they

were planning to build. With SITA Integration Platform as their booking engine, they were able to ignore this otherwise critical factor and focus on which CRS would give them the best value from a services point of view.

### Benefits and results

- Within three months of assembling their technical team, Hotwire was in business.
- SITA Integration Platform enabled quick, easy and economical implementation of added functionality, such as the hotel and car verticals.
- SITA Integration Platform provides support for several thousand simultaneous users with the capacity to scale beyond that number as Hotwire's business grows.
- Hotwire is now the fourth most-visited travel site, with more than 14 million registered users.
- SITA Integration Platform provides Hotwire with host independence, facilitating and expediting development efforts while allowing future host switching to occur seamlessly.

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