



NEWS RELEASE

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Hotels.com, Expedia Implement Settlement and Launch New Website Features to Assist Disabled Travelers

Hotels.com and Expedia Inc., two of the world's leading online travel companies, have launched new website features that will allow disabled travelers to search for and reserve hotel rooms that have accessible accommodations.

A traveler who needs accommodations such as wheelchair-accessible pathways, a roll-in shower, Braille signage, and/or telephone equipment for the deaf can now use the Hotels.com and Expedia.com websites to search for lodgings offering these features. Travelers can now also request a room with one or more specific accessibility features on the online Reservation Page. Requests will be reviewed by the companies' customer service personnel, who will contact the hotel to attempt to reserve a room that fits the bill. Travelers will then receive an email either confirming that the reservation has been made, or offering to help locate an equivalent room at another hotel.

The website improvements were negotiated last year in settlement of a class action lawsuit, *Smith v. Hotels.com L.P.*, brought by AXIS Dance Company and dancers Bonnie Lewkowicz and Judith Smith. In the lawsuit, plaintiffs and their attorneys, Public Justice, Disability Rights Advocates, and law firm Chavez & Gertler, alleged that Hotels.com's failure to accommodate the needs of disabled travelers was a discriminatory practice which violated California law. Implementation of the agreed-upon website improvements is now complete.

"Travelers with disabilities can finally take advantage of the convenience and discounts available on Hotels.com's and Expedia's websites," said Lewkowicz. "This is a huge step forward, and I sincerely hope that all travel web sites will follow suit." Adults with disabilities spend over \$10 billion annually on travel, and nearly half of them consult the Internet to support their travel needs.

For more information about these exciting new reservation procedures, review the FAQs or Customer Support section at www.hotels.com and www.expedia.com. For information about the lawsuit and the settlement agreement, go to <http://www.publicjustice.net/Resources/Cases/Smith-v-Hotelscom.aspx?cpid=18&nid=5204>.

For press coverage about the new website features, click here: [File: Hotels.com_NYTimes_Travel Blog_3.7.10.pdf](#)

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Public Justice is America's public interest law firm, supported by – and calling on -- a nationwide network of more than 3,000 of the nation's top lawyers to pursue precedent-setting and socially significant litigation. It has a wide-ranging litigation docket in the areas of consumer rights, worker safety, civil rights and liberties, toxic torts, environmental protection, and access to the courts. Public Justice is the principal project of the Public Justice Foundation, a not-for-profit membership organization headquartered in Washington, DC, with a West Coast office in Oakland, California. The Public Justice web site address is www.publicjustice.net.