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Declaration on data protection and the absolute confidentiality of your information in oral or written interviews

<p>Dennis Schönke, student at Rhine-Waal University (HSRW, Germany), works according to the provisions of the German Federal Data Protection Act (DSGVO) and all other data protection regulations.</p> <p>There is no disclosure of data that reveals your person.</p> <p>The results of this interview are presented exclusively in anonymised form, except permission is granted to disclose further details. This means: Nobody can tell from the results by which person the information was provided.</p>	<p>The following person is responsible for compliance with data protection regulations:</p> 
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2.4. Item Formulation and Example Interview Guide

To formulate goal-oriented detailed questions (items) for each of our three relevant research categories, we use public communications by our frame population's specific corporations. From corporate presentations and report statements we can see how a certain corporation sees itself, what kind of strategies it follows to reach its goals, and what sources of revenue are maintained as of right now. In this way we can develop items for our research questions that are inclusive to the corporation's predefined goals. Again, every item must have this ultimate goal: To retrieve "the perception of the actors' definition of the situation", an orientation towards qualitative social science (Häder, 2015, p. 63).

Below is given the interview guide for an expert from Travelport, LP (Langley, Berkshire, UK).

2.4.1. Interview guide for Intermediaries

General Bachelor's Thesis:

"Suppliers will work together for a DLT-enriched New Distribution Capability (NDC), and specifically small and medium-sized businesses will demand "DLT-as-a-Service-products."

General research question for Intermediaries:

"Do Intermediaries, such as Metasearch Engines and Online Travel Agencies (OTA), see how New Intermediaries, as defined in NT_29 Exposé (1.2.) (here, page 4), help to change traditional commission-based, price-parity business models?"

Start:

Greetings and thanks for the time investment; Brief outline of the topic; Description of the open, explorative interview process and the approximate duration (ca. 30 Min); Data protection agreement

Introductory questions:

- *How long have you been with _____ and what is your exact job title?*
- *What are your tasks for _____?*
- *What do you associate with Distributed Ledger Technology (DLT)?*

Call back question: *How/when did this evolve?*

Question 1:

IOTA Foundation says that IOTA¹ transactions will be feeless, at live-speed, infinitely scalable, and also environmentally friendly, all much better than Blockchain products.

- *Do you think that DLT-products can play a role in supporting Direct Bookings for travel suppliers?*

¹ iota.org

Question 2:

In reference to NT_29 Exposé (1.2.), Definition of New Intermediaries (here, page 4),

- *What can be the role of an Intermediary in a commercial-DLT-scenario? One single database to which IT Providers (incl. GDS), Suppliers, and Intermediaries connect, would that not make sense for travel distribution?*

Review and Outlook:

Brief summary of what has been said, Thank you again for the time, Information about the Bachelor's thesis / results, Farewell.

1.2. Definition of New Intermediaries: Enabling Direct Booking at large scale

Regarding DLT-possibilities for tourism, no-cost communication of supplier inventory on external websites is thinkable with these well-known intermediary business models: Comprehensive advertising strategies for sustainable businesses and full travel management².

New, innovative intermediaries do not charge commission fees nor have price-parity agreements because DLT-innovation makes this industry practice obsolete at last. Therefore, traditional intermediaries will not be able to sustain traditional, commission-based business models. Together with suppliers, New Intermediaries represent the market pressure for traditional Intermediaries and GDS to change toxic business models.

Speed is another advantage for New intermediaries: Verifying credit card details and finalising transmissions and payment confirmation takes up to 3 work days (Altexsoft, 2019 a)! No more with DLT, where data, value, transactions and verifications between different parties are stored via the very same data highway. This is possible with DLT smart contracts, which New Intermediaries are built upon. Processes connected to bookings and departures via a traditional OTA are much slower than direct bookings the supplier website (Altexsoft, 2019 a). This changes with a New Intermediary that is just as fast as the supplier, because it is the very same database with which supplier and new intermediary are operating.

Traditional Online Travel Agencies (OTA's) start-up businesses experience high market entry barriers like extensive application and training processes in order to access the network of a GDS. (Altexsoft, 2019 b). Do we want a market in which single entities decide who is allowed to enter the market? Independence from such a system is a longterm goal for a new OTA. For these reasons, high performing DLT variants like IOTA³ are developed at the time of writing (<https://chrysalis.iota.org>). IOTA represents "permissionless" networks, a new era of low market entry barriers where new approaches have chances.

Where is the difference to Metasearch Engines (MSE), like Skyscanner⁴? Both are Intermediaries, but MSE only provide links (to OTA or Supplier directly). Then, travellers must still decide between OTA and Supplier (Altexsoft, 2019 a). A New Intermediary always serves suppliers and tour operator directly, because it is the same database, the supplier's own database, with which a New Intermediary is operating, thus, the term Direct Booking in this context.

² tripactions.com

³ <https://www.iota.org/get-started/what-is-iota>

⁴ <https://www.skyscanner.de>

New Intermediaries are heavily supported by Not-for-profit organisations, f.e. IOTA Foundation or Winding Tree: “Expand your reach. Get ahead of competition by getting better rates directly from suppliers.”⁵. However, Winding Tree does not have the vision of a friendly GDS, one that provides DLT services to suppliers. Winding Tree does not take into account that these legacy companies may be fit for a different vital function in the industry.

This work aims not to “disintermediate”⁶ existing structures. The very common “disruption”-mentality among DLT ventures is not applied in this work. Rather, we seek to emphasise the nature and importance of each entity.

⁵ <https://windingtree.com/travel-agencies>

⁶ The word “disintermediation” is not always used specifically, yet, most DLT ventures seek to eliminate middle men without replacement, not seeing further opportunities. One academic example that is following this approach: *Disintermediation in medical tourism through blockchain technology: an analysis using value-focused thinking approach*, by Parekh, J., Jaffer, A., Bhanushali, U. & Shukla, S. (2020), *Information Technology & Tourism*, Volume 23, pages 69–96 (2021). Retrieved on 29.04.2021 from: <https://link.springer.com>