This tutorial has been produced by The Australian Tourism Data Warehouse as part of the complete online education program, Tourism e-kit

TOURISM EXCHANGE AUSTRALIA

Reading time: 15 minutes	Prerequisite: Australian Tourism Data Warehouse

This fact sheet will review how you can make your product bookable at once on many tourism websites using Tourism Exchange Australia.

1) WHAT IS THE TOURISM EXCHANGE AUSTRALIA (TXA)?

The TXA is Australia's inclusive booking platform. The TXA will transform your existing ATDW product listing into a bookable product, thus allowing you **to sell your product on a vast number of tourism distributor's websites simultaneously.**

Enabling your product to be bookable online should bring you significant new business as 60% of travellers indicate that they book online when the product is available.

a) Why is a booking button on my website not sufficient?

It is important to understand that travellers do not only view individual tourism operator's websites but also browse many travel portals, online travel agent websites, as well as tourism distributor websites that aggregate many products and let the user conduct a search, compare different options and complete an instant booking. Being present and bookable in this space will give you the chance to sell more.

As well as your own website, **you should therefore consider other distribution opportunities like larger tourism, travel or media related websites.** They have well developed online marketing strategies aimed at capturing and retaining consumers and they have a greater market reach. They generally have bigger marketing budgets, consumer brand awareness and loyalty programs. Due to the nature of consumer online search behaviour, using as many of these sites as possible will not only deliver bookings through those sites but also increase the likelihood of increasing bookings through your own website.

b) How does the TXA simplify things?

Traditionally, registering with each distributor and allocating your inventory has been a lengthy, difficult, and individual process. To simplify it, the TXA can automatically deliver your rates and availability live to multiple distributors on your behalf through a single input.
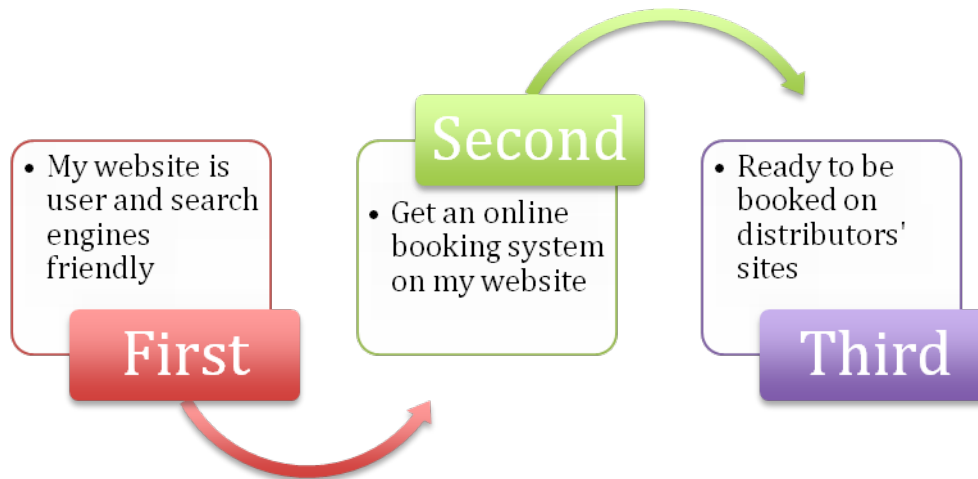
THE TXA IS THE WAY TO MARKET YOUR BUSINESS ONLINE THROUGH MULTIPLE TRAVEL DISTRIBUTOR WEBSITES IN A VERY SIMPLE MANNER

To have your product live and bookable on all TXA distributors websites you need to select a booking system that is integrated to the TXA (see "Online booking system" tutorial).

You choose which distributors you want to use, agree to the distributor's terms and conditions (including commission charges) on an individual basis and simply click to opt in. You can opt out at any time.

2) WHAT IS THE REQUIREMENT TO JOIN THE TXA?

If you want to allow customers to see your availability and rates online you need to firstly ensure your product can be booked online. This means that you **will need to enable your website with an online booking system to allow consumers to book there and then**.

- First: My website is user and search engines friendly
- Second: Get an online booking system on my website
- Third: Ready to be booked on distributors' sites

ADDING AN ONLINE BOOKING FACILITY TO YOUR WEBSITE IS VERY EASY AND STRAIGHTFORWARD

You won't need to pay a web developer to build a customised booking engine for your website. All you need to do is choose an off-the-shelf online booking system and connect it to your website. Online booking systems are very reasonably priced and help increase conversion rates tremendously. Ensure that you select an online booking system that is compatible with the TXA (see tutorial about online booking systems).

Once the online booking is set up on your website, the TXA will pull the information you stored in the online booking system (such as rates and inventory) and make it available to the TXA distributors.

a) Why should I get an online booking button?

Suppose you run the "Adelaide Hills Luxury B&B". Imagine Wendy, a busy Sydney executive travelling to Adelaide for work next Friday. She has decided to explore the region and make the most of the business trip. She is on the Internet at home at 10.30 pm and has found your website, is so excited about your romantic getaway and is ready to book, credit card in hand... but when she looks for the book button to check availability and pay she can't find it (there isn't one). In a hurry, she clicks the back button to return to the search engine results list and clicks on your competitor because she only has 5 minutes and needs to book now. Your competitor has a book now button. Wendy books. You have missed a sale, without even knowing it.

- If you do not have an online booking system, Wendy won't be able to check your availability. Wendy wants an easy solution. She will find someone who has an instant booking system instead, simply

because she doesn't have the time to pick up the phone or send an email and wait for a reply. She expects to search, book, pay, and confirm.

- If you have a booking system, Wendy will book you there and then, and you won't need to spend 15 minutes on the phone at 10.30 pm (or calling her back in the morning) telling her about your availability. Moreover, an integrated online booking system is the prerequisite to be part of the TXA.

b)   Who do I contact to install a booking system?

Paragraph 3c) explains to you how to select an online booking system. However, doing so takes time and you should look into this as soon as possible, in parallel to registering for the TXA.

There are many organisations that provide small and medium tourism businesses with very simple booking systems. The tutorial about online booking will help you select one. You will however, need to ensure that the booking system you choose is integrated with the TXA.

3)   HOW DO I GET MY BUSINESS ON TXA?

The TXA will marry up the information that resides in your booking system and your listing information in the ATDW.
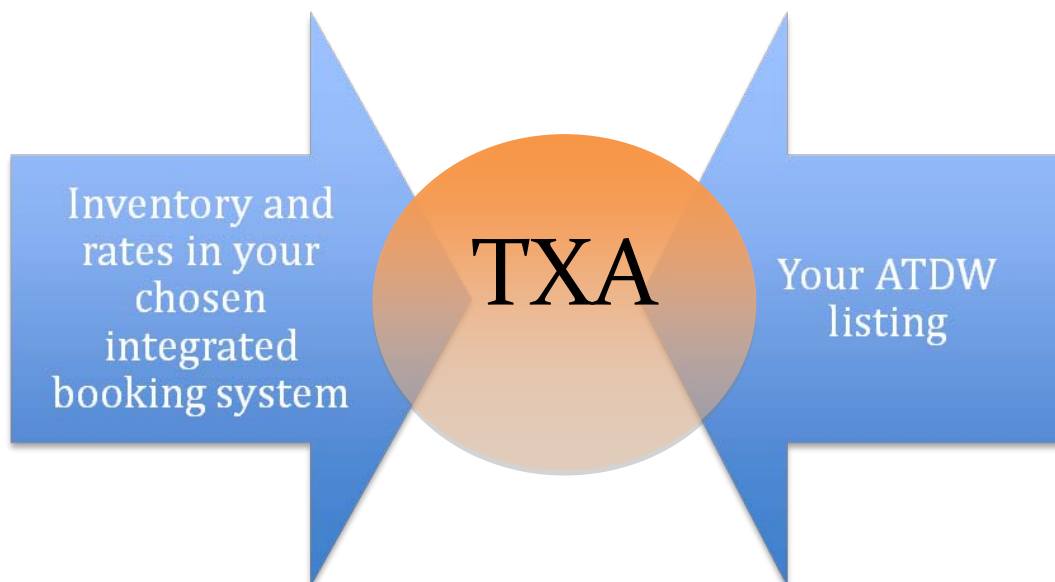
You will therefore need the two components (booking system and ATDW listing) to benefit from the TXA.

a)   What is my current situation?

I am not part of the ATDW but I already have a booking system:	• Contact your relevant state or territory tourism office to become a member of the ATDW: www.atdw.com.au/how_to_list.asp
	• If you need to enquire whether your system is integrated or not, send an

	email to txa@atdw.com.au. • We are continually integrating new systems. If you wish your system to be integrated please contact txa@atdw.com.au.
I am not part of the ATDW and don't have an online booking system:	• Contact your relevant state or territory tourism office to become a member of the ATDW: www.atdw.com.au/how_to_list.asp • Follow steps 1) to 3) below • Read the tutorial about "Online booking systems" to help you select an integrated booking system.
I am part of the ATDW and I don't have a booking system:	• Contact txa@atdw.com.au to let them know that you would like to benefit from the TXA. • Follow steps 1) to 3) below. • Read the tutorial about "Online booking systems" to help you select an integrated booking system.

b)   Step 1: register on the ATDW via my State/Territory Tourism Organisation

1) Each state and territory tourism office has different processes for inclusion on the ATDW. See www.atdw.com.au/how_to_list.asp for their contact details.

1) Complete the registration forms and submit them to your state or territory tourism office. The process for registration may take a couple of weeks. Keep a copy of this on a Microsoft Word document so that you can use it later as it can be useful for copying and pasting into your product description in your online booking system.

2) Your business will then listed on a multitude of websites and increase your product's exposure.

If you are already registered with the ATDW, please go to step 2 below.

c)   Step 2: getting the basics right

Have a close look at your own business. In order to be sold online you need get organised:

1) Contact your bank or shop around to other banks as you may need to organise an "**online merchant facility**" (a system that allows you to process credit card payments online) if the payments are to go direct into your bank account and not be held by a third party. The bank can take a while to process your application so get on to this early.

2) Make sure you **understand what "distribution commission" means**. Ask your regional or state tourism organisation to explain to you what it means. You might also like to consider standardising your rates so that consumers do not find price variances on the Internet

3) You will need to write a **business description** for most systems. You should have already written one for your ATDW registration so consider using the same information in your online booking system to ensure consistency.

Your product description should contain general motivation information about your property or tour company. It should provide the consumer with enough information to make an informed decision and it should answer the following: what, where, how, when and why.

In your product description include keywords that a consumer may use to search for your product.

4) You are probably going to issue a **tax invoice** to the consumer. This isn't issued until after the consumer has booked and paid, so you can be generally confident in adding more confidential information about your business at this point, for example "where to find the key".

5) The consumer will also need to be aware of your **booking terms and conditions** unless your business is sold by a third party. Consider your terms and conditions very carefully. Don't forget your **cancellation policy.**

Base your terms and conditions on the ones you use in a non-web environment. All you will need to do is to adapt them for web usage.

6) You will need to consider how much **inventory** you wish to put in the system.

7) You'll need to **set your rates** and rules that apply to those rates.

d) Step 3: Selecting a booking system to hold my rates and availability

AN ONLINE BOOKING SYSTEM WILL HOLD YOUR RATES AND AVAILABILITY AND MAKE YOU BOOKABLE INSTANTLY ON YOUR WEBSITE.

It is important you acquire enough information to assist you to choose an online booking system that is appropriate to your business. We have put together a separate tutorial called "Online booking systems" to help you select a suitable system. Whilst the "Online booking systems" tutorial does not provide an exhaustive list of potential systems and their features and the things you should consider to help you make a suitable choice, it will provide you with a helpful guide.

To be sold on the TXA your booking system needs to be integrated to the TXA network.

- If you are using a system that is already integrated to the TXA (please refer to the tutorial about "Online booking systems") your product is already able to be sold on ATDW's distribution channels and every booking from an ATDW distributor will go straight through into your reservation system. You will be trained on the use of the extranet, which is the system that will give you access to review the distributor's terms and conditions, and will be able to choose to opt in to be sold via the distributors' channels you desire.

- If you are using another reservation system that is not yet integrated to the TXA or if you need to enquire whether your system is integrated or not, we recommend you contact txa@atdw.com.au so they can integrate your system to the TXA. Once this is done, every booking from an ATDW distributor will go straight through into your reservation system and you won't need to run two systems or continually manually allocate inventory. You will then be trained on the use of the extranet, which is the system that will give you access to review the distributors' terms and conditions, and will be able to choose to opt in to be sold via the distribution channels you desire.

4) SYSTEMS ALREADY INTEGRATED WITH THE TXA

The following online booking systems and polling partners have been already been integrated with the TXA:

- AOT Holidays
- eviivo frontdesk

- Discover Australia Holidays
- Jewel Reservations Systems

- Myfidelio.net
- RMS
- Respax Australia
- Seatem

5) RELATED MATERIAL

a) Related tutorials

- Australian Tourism Data Warehouse
- Online booking systems 101

b) Related websites

- Tourism Exchange Australia: www.atdw.com.au/tourism_exchange_australia_operators.asp