

FACT SHEET

GLOBAL DISTRIBUTION SYSTEMS

“Meeting every traveler’s every need.”

Nearly 50 years of service...

In the late 1950s and early 1960s, several airlines created their own proprietary automated reservation systems to manage increasing volume and the complexity of booking air travel. By the 1970s, American Airlines’ *Sabre* system, TWA’s *PARS* system, Eastern Airlines’ *System One* system, United Airlines’ *Apollo* system, and Delta Airlines’ *Datas II* system evolved to become the most popular systems in use. In the late 1970s and early 80s the airlines expanded their systems to provide service to multiple airlines, and began installing their reservation systems directly in travel agent offices to allow more convenient and efficient access for travel agents.

... with a steady track record of innovation.

This expansion gave birth to a completely new industry – the interactive travel services industry. Since then, the reservations systems have evolved beyond mere air travel reservation systems to become independently owned companies capable of handling tens of millions of transactions a day for every aspect of the travel services industry. Currently, there are four main systems in operation, now commonly known as Global Distribution Systems, or GDSs – Amadeus, Galileo, Sabre and Worldspan. Today’s GDSs provide the wide variety of highly complex travel services demanded by today’s modern travel agent meeting the needs of today’s savvy traveler.

- GDS systems –
 - Deliver a worldwide distribution network.
 - Offer sophisticated tools to help today’s modern travel agency operate efficiently.
 - Provide extraordinary service to customers.
 - Pioneered electronic ticketing.
 - Pioneered travel e-commerce.
 - Developed and deployed the first graphical interfaces for airline seat selection as well as for all other aspects of the travel industry – hotel, car, and other suppliers.
 - Developed the ability to integrate and simultaneously display published, private/negotiated, consolidator and Web fares for travel agents.
 - Developed lowest fare search capability
 - Developed best-price comparison capability for consumer travel values

Delivering broad depth and scope...

- A GDS in operation today can be found in –
 - More than 10,000 airline sales offices.
 - Over 67,000 travel agency locations.
 - Up to 240 markets worldwide.

... combined with tried and trusted performance...

- Today's modern GDS system –
 - Is available and accessible 99.9% of the time.
 - Processes up to 17,000 messages per second during peak times.
 - Operates on cutting edge enterprise systems architecture.
 - Enjoys response times of a fraction of a second.
 - Is capable of booking a multitude of transactions.
 - Can make itinerary changes up to the last minute and complete complex international routings to every country in the world.
 - Automates the time-consuming and complex process of re-pricing airline tickets when itineraries change.
 - Permits customers to send email and faxes without exiting the system.
 - Allows customers to compare fares and availability to shop for the most convenient travel at the least cost.
 - Securely stores tens of millions of passenger name records, to ensure that customers receive the travel preferences they most desire.

... and the strongest economic value in the marketplace.

- On a given day, a GDS can access –
 - Over one billion fare combinations.
 - More than 95% of available world seats.
 - More than 750 airlines.
 - More than 50,000 hotel properties.
 - Over 400 tour operators.
 - Nearly 30,000 car rental locations.
- GDS systems are capable of booking –
 - One way and roundtrip airline seats
 - Hotel rooms
 - Rental cars
 - Tours
 - Cruises
 - Bus and rail tickets
 - Insurance
 - Limousines

- Event and theater attractions
- Dining reservations
- Itinerary changes
- Complex international routings
- And more
- In addition to costs for ticketing, GDS fees pay for much more, including –
 - Training
 - Telecommunications
 - Equipment
 - Equipment maintenance
 - Call center support

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ITSA, the Interactive Travel Services Association, is the industry representative for travel distribution companies throughout the world.