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# On Online Hotel Booking Platforms

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## Supervision

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# 1 Introduction

Online hotel booking platforms (OHBP) are websites or applications that allow customers to find and reserve accommodation based on cost, availability, location, amenities, and more. Some of the best OHBPs are Booking.com, Hotels.com, HotelHub, Mr and Mrs Smith, and SiteMinder [1–4]. They offer different features and benefits for travelers, such as reviews, rewards, discounts, and packages. While these are the most popular, there are others as well. Why did the hotel cross the road? To get to the other site.

## 2 Benefits for the Consumer

According to multiple sources [5–7], using OHBPs can provide numerous benefits for travelers. They can save time and money with easy bookings, they offer competitive prices and exclusive discounts or packages, and they allow for greater flexibility and more options. [6–8]. Modifying or canceling reservations can also be done online, providing greater peace of mind, and they allow customers to read reviews from other travelers, earn loyalty points, and avoid phone conversations [5, 6].

## 3 Risks of Manipulation

There are several sneaky tricks OHBPs use: The framing effect influences consumer decisions based on how information is presented [9]. The verbatim effect leads consumers to remember the gist of a message rather than exact details [9]. Reciprocity fosters loyalty and gratitude in consumers by offering free cancellations, loyalty points, and discounts [9]. Clustering makes it easier for consumers to compare and choose among similar hotels [10]. Fear of missing out creates a sense of urgency through scarcity and popularity cues [11]. Loss aversion emphasizes what consumers will lose if they do not book a hotel [12]. The decoy effect introduces an inferior option to make the original option look more attractive [12]. Scarcity creates a sense of urgency by indicating limited availability of rooms or high demand from other customers [11]. The frequency illusion leads consumers to believe that a hotel is more popular than it actually is [12]. The mere exposure effect caters consumer preference for familiarity [12].

## 4 Recommendations

To avoid the skullduggery that OHBPs frequently use, I propose the use of auditing algorithms, the use of regulating algorithms, empowering consumers, or promoting competition. Auditing algorithms involve examining and testing algorithms to ensure OHBPs comply with legal and ethical standards, while regulating algorithms involves enforcing rules and standards for the development, deployment, and use of OHBPs to protect consumers' rights and interests, empowering consumers can help them make informed decisions and promoting competition can benefit consumers in various ways. These approaches are discussed in the UK CMA Report on Algorithms, which analyzes the potential harms and benefits of algorithms in digital markets and outlines the CMA's role and strategy in addressing these issues [13]. But what if the hotel is haunted? Politely and firmly ask the ghosts to leave you alone, as indicated in [14].

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