

Jerseylink: The Island of Jersey Central Reservations System

The introduction of a Central Reservation System (CRS) for Jersey was a key objective of the Island's government, a need which was strongly supported by the tourism industry.

The aims of the Jersey Central Reservations System are to provide an easy, quick and cost-effective way for the off-island trade and consumer to book hotel

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and guest house accommodation in Jersey; and to provide Jersey with a competitive edge in the market place.

The principal objective of a CRS was to provide a platform for effective ongoing accommodation (and associated services) distribution in the voice-based and electronic market places and through these means help to support sustainable tourism initiatives and tourism infrastructure investment on the Island of Jersey.

The Case for a CRS

In the following list eight major viewpoints are mentioned which built the guidelines for the development of the CRS.

1. It is relatively easy to book a Jersey holiday by buying a tour operator's package. It is very difficult to book accommodation separately through a travel agent, or independently if you are a first-time visitor.
2. It is the policy of the Island's government to maintain a balance between tour operators and independent bookings to preserve the character of the Jersey industry.
3. The trend for more independent bookings appears to be growing as people become more confident travellers.
4. Improved consumer awareness of technology and its advantages, e.g. Internet.
5. Ease of booking and simplicity.
6. Matching demand with supply and responding to market trends.
7. Generating new business.
8. Provide market intelligence.

The Launch of a Jersey CRS

In December 1994, Jersey Tourism established the concept of a Central Reservations System using the Cray Systems reservations product ATOP (Auto-file Tour Operators System). The Jersey Tourism CRS and Distribution Development Plan has eight phases as outlined below.

1 - Linking the Supply Interface

Approximately 160 hotels and guest houses (50% of the total on the Island) were linked on to the system using remote terminals, either via a video terminal & modem or a PC & modem with VT emulation and software. These suppliers were then able to maintain their inventory and update their availability via remote access, therefore providing accurate and up to date information.

2 - Making Sales

Sales are made by Jersey Tourism's reservations office, Jerseylink, who access the database for accommodation, matching clients requirements with the most appropriate available accommodation. Jerseylink reservations went live in February 1995 and during the first year of operation over 10,000 passengers were booked through the CRS, accounting for 1.8% of all the Island's visitors during 1995. With Phase 1 and Phase 2 now in place, the project development continues as follows:

3 - Linking to Island Tour Operators

Background: The travel trade account for around 60% of Jersey's total year round tourism market, and the majority of tourism sales (45%) are transacted via tour operators, many of whom specialise in Channel Islands trading. There are around 50 tour operators trading in the Jersey market place.

Operational overview: It is anticipated that up to 25 tour operators will participate in the CRS and that initial interconnection will be via PC direct. A tour operator agent interface is needed. Connection will be via modem, of which 32 are currently installed. An appropriate proportion of these can be allocated to tour operator interconnection.

Marketing objectives: The principal aim is to provide a neutral platform for the sale of Jersey accommodation and thus to enable a level playing field for professional sales agency management, regardless of distribution sector.

4 - Inter-working With UK Travel Trade

Background: The travel trade account for around 60% of Jersey's total tourism market, and significant tourism sales (15%) are transacted directly via retail travel agents, mostly from the UK domestic market. There are around 7,000 travel

agents operating in the UK market place.

Operational overview: It is anticipated that up to 200 UK travel agents will participate in the CRS and that subsequent demand growth in this sector will enhance agent participation to around 500 accounts in subsequent years. Initial interconnection is currently envisaged to be via viewdata terminals.

Marketing objectives: The principal aim is to provide a neutral platform for the sale of Jersey accommodation and thus to enable a level playing field for professional sales agency management, regardless of distribution sector.

5 - Linking With Local Businesses and Gateway Reservations Partners

Background: Jersey is a principal financial and commercial services market place with an all year need for supporting visitor accommodation. Most local firms will have contacts and contractual relationships with several local hotels or guest houses.

Operational overview: It is envisaged that local business will be supplied with CRS access software (restricted functionality) that will enable them to connect via PC to a 'single number' service providing reservations and guest information services. It is possible that this service may be administered within the context of a *Jerseylink* business club, with both suppliers and local business customers being registered for account-based trading. It is anticipated that around 200 local businesses and approximately 40% of suppliers could register with a Jerseylink business club. Around 20 transport companies and gateway services agencies are expected to interconnect with Jerseylink in order to trade in Jersey accommodation. The local business-connect and gateway-connect services would be operated via modem, of which 32 are currently installed. An appropriate proportion of these can be allocated for local business and gateway interconnection.

Marketing objectives: A specific objective of this phase is to improve and enhance 'bookability' in the direct access distribution sector.

Other Phases

The planning for the following phases is yet to be completed:

- 6- Provision of a front end Internet GUI and associated services
- 7- Linking with hotel property management systems
- 8- Linking with global distribution system (GDS). ■

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