

# Opinion: Be wary of the travel industry

By Christopher Elliott, Washington Post

It's for your own good.

Travelers are hearing these words more often than ever, and they are being applied to increasingly unwelcome scenarios. The latest example: being unable to access WiFi in your hotel without incurring an added charge. In August, the American Hotel & Lodging Association and Marriott filed a petition with the Federal Communications Commission asking the government for permission to block wireless devices in hotels.

Marriott, you might recall, last year paid a \$600,000 fine for allegedly interfering with its guests' personal wireless hotspots at one of its large convention properties. The hotel chain argued that its having the authority to disrupt these connections would make customers less vulnerable to hackers and "unauthorized network access."

In other words, the chain wants to jam your cellular hotspot for your own good.

The hotels fail to mention, of course, that they'd also earn a bundle by charging guests for access when they can't use their own wireless devices to connect to the Internet.

Airlines, car rental companies and cruise lines are using similar rhetoric to push their own agendas. Customers have come to expect such obfuscation that some travel companies have built their business on opting for straight talk. But with a little digging, you can always unearth the truth and maybe keep your vacation budget in check.

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