

Power to the people! Should plugging-in whilst travelling be an inalienable right?

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Mid-Atlantic at 30,000 feet and catastrophe strikes. Slowly the fuel supply counts down to zero. Only minutes are left for last minute messages to loved ones. Regret turns to grief and grief turns to blame.

Sounds like a film scenario? This is so much worse. Not only is it happening to you, it is happening right in the middle of your *favourite* Netflix drama. Yes, you've just become another battery failure statistic.

Despite setting off on their journey with a 100% charged battery, every day tens of thousands of travellers have this most frustrating of experiences. How can something so simple and so plentiful evaporate the minute you pack your suitcase?

This is a classic example of how the needs of consumers have adapted faster than the infrastructure of the travel & tourism industry. Should the right to power-up whilst on the move be inalienable? Politicians might win a few votes if they proposed it.

But until then travel & tourism industry operators can gain a considerable competitive edge by fulfilling this simple need for electricity. Charged-up smart phones also mean potential customers for in-flight and in-destination services sold via Wi-Fi.

Perhaps the difficulty of retrofitting airplanes and trains with plugs for every passenger partly explains why they are almost always power-supply deserts. Slowly this could change. But there is really little excuse for why airports and train stations don't have plentiful charging points.

Resorts, theme parks and conference centers have also fallen behind too. The latter is often even more frustratingly, given you can spend all day or more at a conference. Hotel rooms of course come with a plug or two, but more plugs are needed (including dedicated USB ports) and they are needed in more useful positions: too often they are on the floor or far from the desk space.

Surely this is a business opportunity for travel tech entrepreneurs? A moving charging station is simple to set up in any public place and the station could be branded or sponsored - as well as used for up-selling travellers a coffee, in-destination experience or more.

All this is why at Hotelbeds Group we are sponsoring power-supply charging stations at the upcoming Skift Global Forum in New York City and the Phocuswright Conference in Los Angeles. We already power hotel distribution, so the opportunity to power the whole industry seemed a logical next step!

When John Lennon sang *Power to the people* back in 1971 he wanted nothing short of a revolution. All these years later could it become a protest song for frustrated travellers? Download the song now and next time your phone or laptop is on death row whilst in transit, go out with a very loud public statement. Or just write an angry letter. Either way, future generations will thank you.

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