

Alibaba creates Alitrip for online travel arrangements

SHANGHAI, CHINA: Chinese e-commerce company Alibaba, which completed the world's biggest stock offering last month, is tapping into the country's growing online travel business with an independent platform, known as [Alitrip](#).



Li Shaohua announces the creation of China's new travel platform Alitrip, that takes over the Taobao Travel, also part of the Alibaba empire. Image: [Getty Images](#)

Previously its travel service was run as Taobao Travel, but the new platform will form an integral part of Alibaba group and it said it foresees huge unmet demand for travel services in China.

"Alitrip will enrich our ecosystem and create value for users by providing them with high-quality services and an array of new functions," said Alitrip General Manager Li Shaohua.

China already has two major online travel agencies, Ctrip and Elong.

Headquartered in the eastern city of Hangzhou, Alibaba operates China's most popular online shopping platform, Taobao is estimated to hold more than 90% of the online market for consumer-to-consumer transactions.

Alibaba's ambitions have grown beyond e-commerce and extended to sectors including entertainment and logistics in a frenzy of deals ahead of the company's listing on the New York Stock Exchange.

According to a statement from Alibaba, Alitrip currently has more than 10,000 merchants offering services ranging from flights and hotel bookings to visa applications.

Data from consulting firm iResearch showed that China's online travel market jumped by 20% year-on-year in the third quarter to reach 72.6bn yuan (\$11.9bn) in transaction value.

Source: AFP via I-Net Bridge

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