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Thomas Cook rolls out software as developer eyes TUI deal

# I-Tour tool could replace viewdata

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Thomas Cook has begun the roll-out of technology its developers believe can become the new viewdata, not just for the UK but across Europe.

Developer BlueSky Travel Systems even hopes to interest TUI in the software, breaking the unwritten rule that technology developed for one of the two German-owned majors will be ignored by the other.

BlueSky's I-Tour platform is now in use at Thomas Cook Signature and should be extended to comparable MyTravel brands such as Tradewinds soon. It will spread to the first of Thomas Cook's continental tour operators in the new year and to UK mass market operations in mid-2008.

BlueSky managing director Mark Fallon said: "TUI is of interest to us. The \$64,000 question is will TUI entertain it? We've heard TUI is nowhere near as advanced with its projects."



**I-Tour will roll out to UK mass market operations by mid-2008**

BlueSky already works with a division of First Choice – at First Choice Independent Travel – which will merge with TUI in October. Fallon said: "It is a small beachhead in the organisation.

"The merger has resulted in a new set of dynamics at TUI. As it picks up momentum we may make a proposition. Merged companies need to take costs out of the business. One way of doing that is through standardisation."

He expects rapid take up elsewhere. "A number of UK businesses are looking at us and we are looking at opportunities across northern Europe. Some major tour operators are looking to see how this delivers. We are confident it will set the industry standard.

"It is an opportunity to become the new viewdata, to be the number one, worldwide reservations system."

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