



Easy come, easy go

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Believe it or not, comfort is just a click away. Travel portals are tying up with telecom companies – *Yatra.com* and Reliance Communication and *MakeMyTrip.com* is in talks with Bharti Airtel – to make travel easier. You can now get airfare updates and book tickets through an SMS.

But for those who are not ready to step out of these endless queues at Nizamuddin or play catch-catch with the travel agent, here is how the whole thing works. Sachin Bhatia of *MakeMyTrip.com* says, “Mobile booking, is easy. Anyone using WAP and GPRS enabled phones, would know. SMS is still easier and can be used by everyone.”

But the average Indian traveller will not use this facility unless it is married to a secure payment arrangement. “No one would want to give their credit

card numbers over SMSes,” says Bhatia. But he then adds that *MakeMyTrip* has found a solution which will be introduced soon enough.

But such arrangement has left the small travel agencies sulking. Amit Gupta owner of Unik Travels articulates the concern succinctly. He says, “Business *main loss toh* definitely *ho raha hai*. *Hum bhi* website *nikalne ki soch rahein hain* because website business looks like the future.”

The minnows might be perturbed but the sharks (read the big travel houses) are shrugging aside all concerns, at least for the time being. Neeraj Sarna of International Travel house said, “A person who was using these travel portals previously and had never used our facilities would just shift from the Internet to mobile phones. So it is just a migration and it does not pose any threat to us.”

Now this is something only time will tell.