

1. Editorial control

Guest reviews should only be published after verification by qualified editorial staff of the authenticity and reliability of the entry.

Ciao has an active community of more than 2.9 million members. Those members do not only contribute opinions on more than 20 top categories, but also evaluate each other's content by rating this from "very helpful" to "not helpful". Ciao then ranks reviews according to the value to the user. In that sense, the Ciao community takes the role of editorial verification and evaluation.

2. Prevention of manipulation

2.1 Site providers should ensure that reviews of a hotel are provided only by guests who have actually stayed in the hotel.

In an active community, this is not necessary as manipulated reviews will normally get flagged by the community or rated as "not helpful". If easy to integrate and free of charge, we are of course additionally willing to use a general API provided by Hotrec that certifies that users have stayed in a specific hotel.

2.2 Guests should indicate their date of stay in the hotel.

The Ciao reviews have a publishing date; the actual date of the stay is not required

2.3 The number of ratings in relation to the number of hotel rooms should be a factor in the calculation of any ranking.

Ciao thinks that every review should equally count into the aggregated ranking, regardless of the number of rooms. It is not our belief that the absolute size of a hotel influences the experience or even the quality of the rooms.

2.4 The review site should indicate the source of input of individual reviews if they are originally stemming from a third party's website in order to give guests and hoteliers the possibility to trace back the review.

Ciao only shows user reviews from its own community, always showing the member's user-name

2.5 Information displayed on review sites should be truthful and not biased impurely towards the user in order to divert him to third parties booking channels.

Ciao agrees that information should be truthful. User reviews represent individual opinions and will be ranked according to usefulness to other users

3. Quality assurance

3.1 Site providers should ensure that hotel contact coordinates, basic content data, availability or rates figures shown on their sites are displayed accurately.

Ciao usually depends on 3rd party providers from whom basic information is licensed. It is Ciao's ambition to have the highest possible accuracy in data coming from those providers

3.2 Reviews should only refer to the hotel facilities that are actually offered by the hotel. For example, an evaluation of the "gastronomic" performance of a hotel offering breakfast only should not influence the rating of this hotel.

Ciao aggregates ratings based on the overall ratings of the individual reviews. Users are free to rate individual criteria as they see fit (quality of the breakfast for instance can be a very important criterion in choosing a hotel)

3.3 The hotel guest should be led to comment exclusively upon the services and offers he/she actually took advantage of during his/her stay in the hotel. For example, a guest not using the spa facilities or the restaurant of a hotel should refrain from posting a review on these hotel facilities.

Ciao's reviews are a general review of the experience a guest made with a certain hotel. His general view on the hotel will determine his overall rating which will be aggregated into the overall ranking.

3.4 Review sites should provide the user with evaluation criteria, which are

- relevant;
- with appropriate levels of detail;
- commensurate with the characteristics of the hotel; and
- open for additional questions on request by the hotel.

Ciao agrees on the first 2 points. On point 3&4, Ciao believes in a standardized format of evaluating hotels. The format for reviews is very open and reviews are often very detailed (see: [http://travel.ciao.co.uk/The Strand Palace Hotel London Review 5757882](http://travel.ciao.co.uk/The_Strand_Palace_Hotel_London_Review_5757882))

3.5 The user should be given the opportunity to express the evaluation not only via ratings, but also via "open" texts.

Agreed, open text is the most important way for members on Ciao to express their experiences

4. Anonymity

Reviews should not be anonymous to the site provider, through whose intermediation the hotelier should have the possibility to react. The site provider should reconfirm e-mail addresses used by guests and exclude temporary e-mail addresses.

Agreed: In order to write a Ciao review, a user needs to register as a user, accept the Terms&Conditions and provide e-mail addresses and other information upon registration.

In case the hotelier wants to contact the user, he can either do it himself through the integrated messaging system on the platform or contact Ciao community support to help him.

5. Minimum number of reviews

5.1 Sites should only display reviews when the number of reviews for a specific hotel is meaningful in relation to the number of rooms.

Ciao strongly believes that also a single review can be helpful and meaningful for other users regardless of the number of rooms of a certain hotel

5.2 In order to avoid a "chicken-and-egg problem" during the construction phase of a review site, its provider should take particular care in supervising the individual reviews until a critical number is reached.

Ciao's community reads and evaluates reviews that are published on the site. As an independent and neutral platform, Ciao itself does not supervise, censor or edit reviews

6. Business relations

For the sake of independent choices and transparency for consumers and hoteliers, hotel review providers should communicate the basics of sources of their revenues.

All of Ciao's user reviews are written by registered members, whose member name is displayed next to the review

7. Right of reply

In case a review is posted (positive or negative), sites should automatically inform the hotel about it (e.g. by an e-mail "alert" system) and offer the hotel the chance to react. Such a procedure will allow the hotel to assess and manage guest complaints actively and promptly. When available, use should also be made of the official ombudspersons for the hotel industry and their mediation services.

Ciao offers the possibility for everyone to register (for free) and to subscribe to reviews regarding one (or more) hotels – which will send a notification every time a review is written. Through Ciao's community management team, issues with a certain review can be addressed

8. Legal certainty

Reviews should be truthful and based on the personal experiences of their authors. Hoteliers have a legal right of protection against defamatory criticisms. False factual statements should be removed from sites in a quick and non-bureaucratic manner.

By agreeing to the Terms&Conditions of Ciao, users sign off on this principle. Furthermore, upon request, the Ciao community team will contact the user in order to ask for a verification of the review, for example a scan of the hotel's invoice. Factual statements proven to be false will be removed.

9. Up-to-date data

Sites should only display current reviews. After a maximum of two years, reviews should no longer influence the rating and should be deleted automatically.

Ciao does not delete any reviews, but will first show reviews written in the last 12 month. Reviews older than 12 month will be shown after the newer ones. Most hotels do not change significantly every 2 years, so even older reviews have a value to users.

10. Official star classification

10.1 In order to increase transparency for consumers, hotel review providers should always supply information about the official star classification of hotels in accordance with the system in place in the country(ies) concerned, including a link to the applicable classification criteria and specify when they use their own classification system..

Ciao's hotel information is usually provided by 3rd party providers who do not offer this information at this time

10.2 Review sites should check star levels of establishments at least yearly together with the official classification providers. Review sites are invited also to include reference to quality schemes.

See above

10.3 Under no circumstances should star symbols be used for reviews, so as to avoid any confusion with official hotel classifications.

Ciao uses star-symbol classification for all areas in more than 20 top categories across 7 countries. Star ratings are a well-established way of expressing aggregated ratings throughout the internet. Ciao does not believe that star-symbols on Ciao will be confused with any country-specific star classification for hotels.