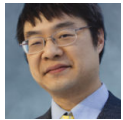


Why is it cheaper to fly out of Vancouver for spring break instead of Seattle, while also being cheaper to fly out of Seattle for spring break instead of Vancouver?

 devblogs.microsoft.com/oldnewthing/20180330-01

March 30, 2018



Raymond Chen

Some relatives from Vancouver, British Columbia came to visit, and we mentioned that when we fly out on vacation for spring break, we found that the airplane tickets are much cheaper if we drive up to Canada and fly out of Vancouver International Airport. On the other hand, they noted that when they fly out on vacation for spring break, they found that the airplane tickets are much cheaper if they drive down to the United States and fly out of Bellingham International Airport. (They don't come all the way down to Seattle, but hey, work with me on the title, okay?)

So how can it be cheaper to drive from the United States to Canada to catch a flight, while also being cheaper to drive from Canada to the United States?

This violation of the trichotomy of numbers perplexed one of my relatives. Did we take the exchange rate into account? (Yes.)

And then the light bulb turned on.

The Vancouver and Seattle school systems have spring break at different times!

In mid-March, Vancouver public schools go on spring break, but Seattle schools are still in session, so there is higher demand for vacation travel in Vancouver than in Seattle. And then a few weeks later, the Seattle schools go on spring break, and the demand flips. In both cases, you are comparing prices in a high-demand region to those in a low-demand region, which is why the prices are lower in the airport far away from you.

I'll be on vacation next week for spring break, but I've left the blog running on autopilot. To increase the likelihood that it's still working when I get back, I scheduled a bunch of boring topics for next week.

[Raymond Chen](#)

Follow

