



How artificial intelligence is reshaping travel experiences

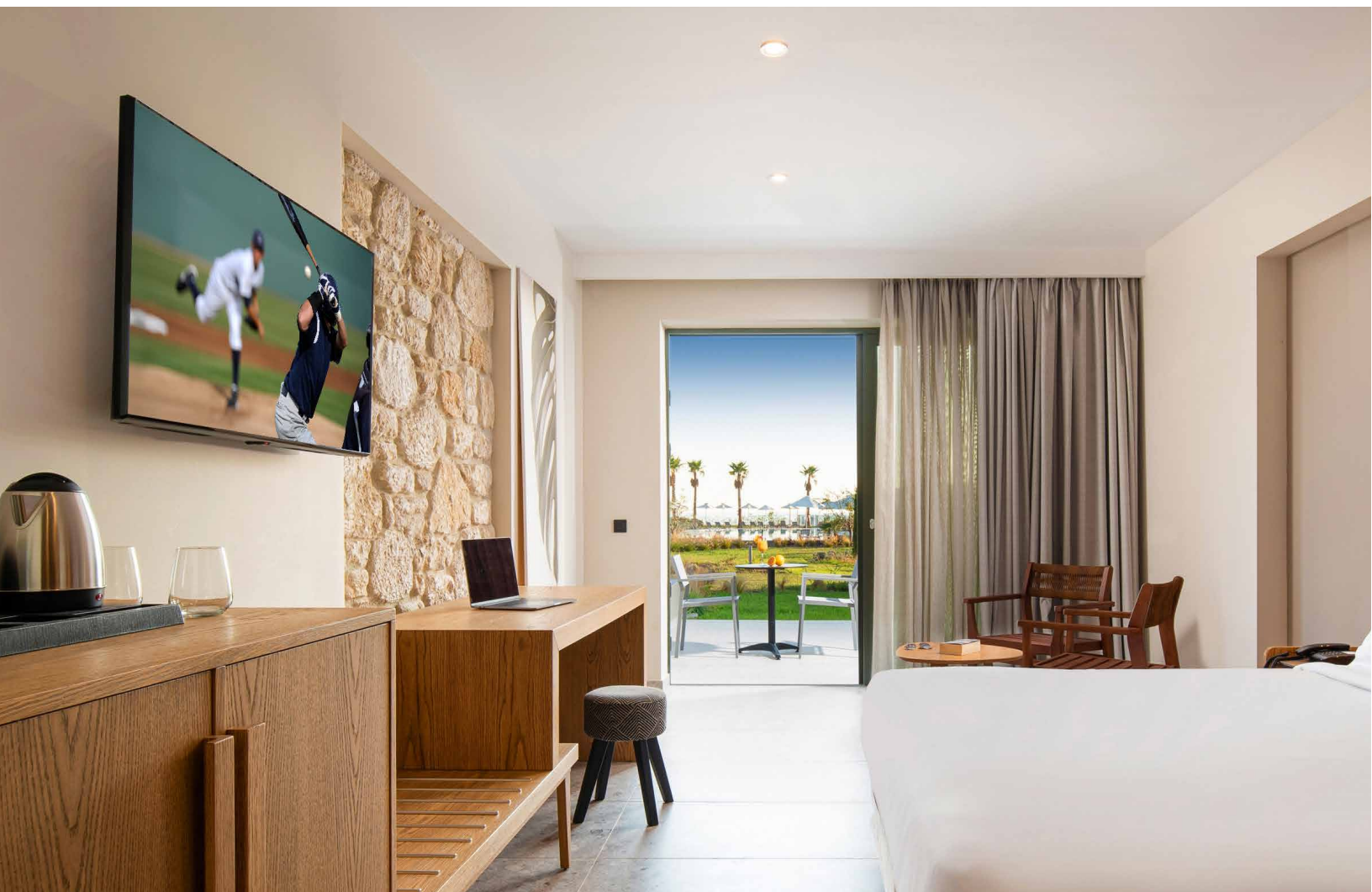
DIRECTV
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The artificial intelligence shift

When hotels think about artificial intelligence (AI), the focus is usually on the booking journey: how travelers search, compare properties and decide where to stay. And with good reason: AI is already deeply embedded in that process. But there's a shift happening that's much easier to miss and arguably more important: AI doesn't stop influencing the guest once they book. It travels with them.

In March 2026, DIRECTV HOSPITALITY® commissioned independent research^o surveying 2000 U.S.-based travelers 21+ who spend at least five nights a year in hotels. Sharing their AI usage habits, the data shows that **80% of travelers have already used one or more AI tools**, and a third are using them specifically to plan trips.

Read on to learn how AI helps reshape the travel experience.



The rise of the “AI-assisted guest”

Today’s travelers aren’t just digitally connected; they’re increasingly AI-assisted. More than a third of travelers (34%) are using AI tools to replace the information and sources traditionally used, such as review sites, social media influencers and travel agents.

- 44%** use it for travel inspiration or conversational trip planning.
- 40%** say it helps centralize research.
- 38%** feel comfortable booking with AI.
- 37%** say it saves time.

And they’re not leaving that behavior behind once the trip begins:

- 29%** are already using AI during their stay to answer questions.
- 21%** are using it to handle disruptions, adjust plans and translate languages.

This demonstrates how AI serves as a digital companion throughout the travel experience, helping travelers navigate various stages of their journey.

Evolving traveler expectations

The shift in AI usage signals that traveler expectations are evolving. Hotel guests are arriving better informed, more self-sufficient and more accustomed to instant, personalized answers. Guests no longer rely on a single source of information. Even before arriving, they’ve likely:

- Compared and selected properties using AI (33%)
- Cross-checked pricing and reviews (trusted by ~70%)

And once on property, that behavior continues. If something isn’t clear, immediate or easy to find, they’ll simply ask AI.



The shift from information to experience

Historically, hotel staff—especially the concierge—served as the primary source of information for guests: where to go, what to do and how to navigate their stay.

But as AI takes on more of that informational heavy lifting, the role of the hotel is evolving. The opportunity now isn't just to inform—it's to design and reinforce the guest experience.

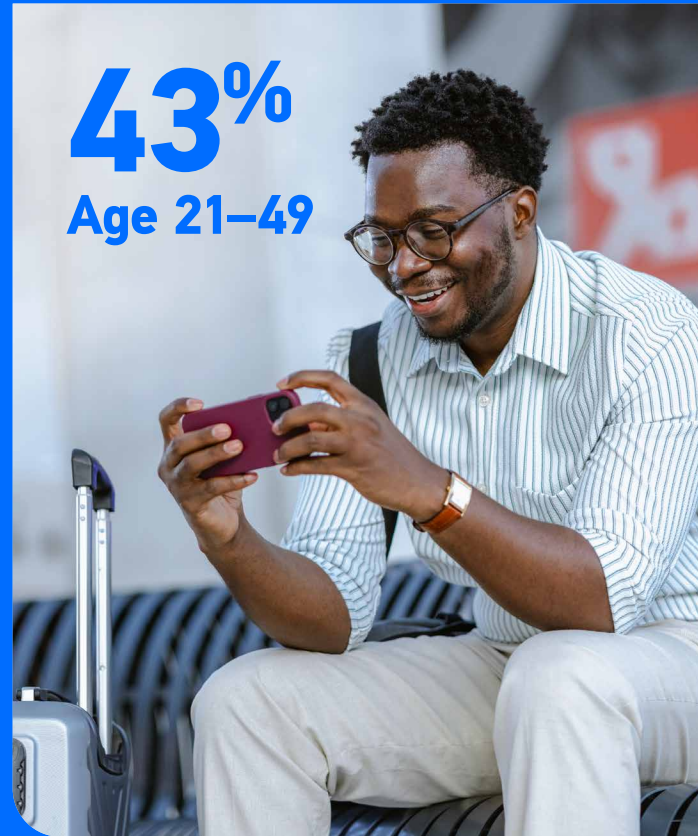
“AI can suggest and summarize, but it can't deliver the atmosphere of a space, express a brand's personality or guide guests through a curated, on-property journey,” says Kim Twiggs, Vice President of Business Development at DIRECTV HOSPITALITY.

And while nearly 70% of travelers trust AI for ideas and comparisons, only 39% trust it to fully plan a trip—signaling they're still looking for validation beyond the algorithm.

AI tool usage is higher among travelers under 50

Of those using AI tools to book travel

43%
Age 21–49



17%
Age 50+

The human touch

As AI increasingly guides travelers in real time, hotels have an opportunity to reinsert themselves into the guest experience in more meaningful ways. This is where intentional communication—and the human touch—becomes a true differentiator.

“Technology is not a replacement for human interaction,” says Twiggs. “The key to balancing technology with human interaction lies in ensuring technology complements, rather than replaces, personal service.”

Ultimately, the distinction between technology and hospitality comes down to how well hotel teams anticipate needs, communicate clearly, and deliver a seamless, high-quality experience at every stage of the guest journey.

Because while AI can help guide the guest, it’s the human touch that helps make the stay memorable.

The AI traveler trust gap

Trust in AI is highest for inspiration and for managing large amounts of information.

Consumer trust in AI for travel tasks

70% for travel ideas and inspiration

69% price comparison for hotels and flights

69% summarizing reviews

39% fully planning a trip



The in-room guest experience

The guest room is one of the places where hotels have direct, uninterrupted access to their guests, an opportunity often underutilized.

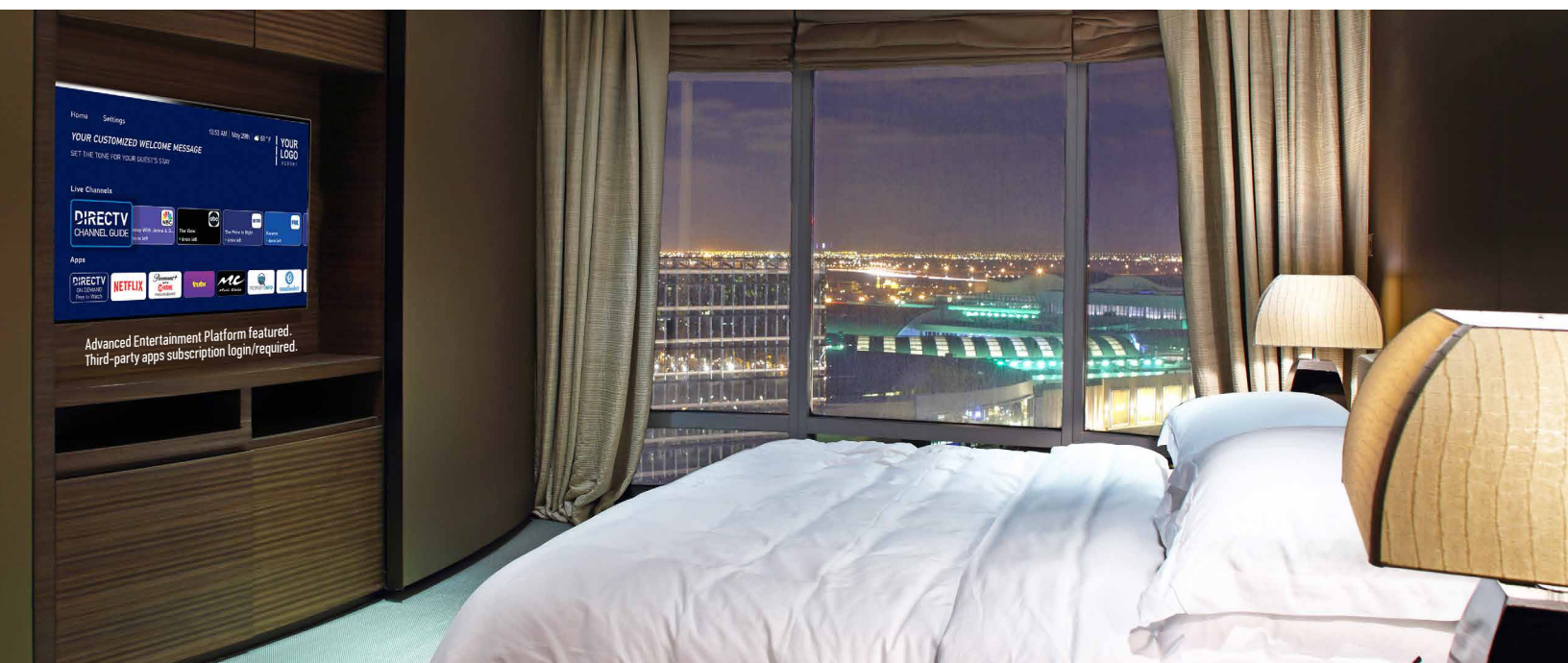
As guests increasingly rely on AI for answers and recommendations, hotels have a chance to bring that guidance and influence back in-house. By using in-room entertainment systems like DIRECTV's Advanced Entertainment Platform (AEP), hotels can highlight key amenities, reinforce on-property experiences and surface valuable information guests may not have thought to ask for.

Localized content is one of the ways hotels can move from being a place to stay recommended by AI to a gateway to the destination itself. DIRECTV HOSPITALITY's ability to offer local content insertion allows hotels to feature pre-recorded short-form videos featuring anything from neighborhood guides to insider

recommendations guests might not find anywhere else.

AEP can also help highlight property features that an AI tool might not have access to. For example, with the click of a remote control into AEP's Property Information App, guests can find the hours of operation for the hotel restaurants, bars, spas, fitness centers, swimming pools and more. By promoting special offerings on-site versus competitive venues, hoteliers can increase the usage of amenities, help drive revenue and help improve the guest experience.

As AI continues to simplify travel decisions, the hotels that stand out will be the ones that show up clearly during the planning and booking process, deliver consistently during the stay and reinforce their value at every touchpoint.



Key takeaways

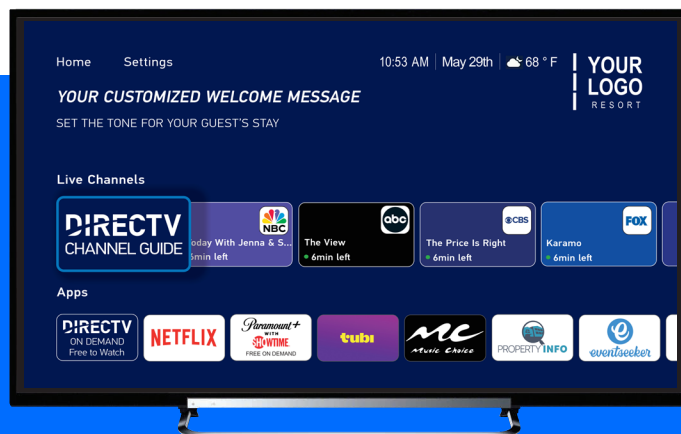
As AI continues to reshape how travelers discover, evaluate and choose where to stay by helping to streamline decisions and simplify an overwhelming amount of information, it has become a companion throughout the journey. But while AI can guide, recommend and inform, it cannot define the experience itself. That responsibility still belongs to the hotel.

By building on the convenience AI provides with intentional communication, a clearly defined Brand voice and personalized service, hotels can help transform informed choices into meaningful stays. In doing so, they

move beyond being simply selected by AI to becoming truly experienced by the guest, helping turn moments of efficiency into moments of genuine connection.

Consider DIRECTV HOSPITALITY's Advanced Entertainment Platform as your guest entertainment solution. Combining live TV, app-based streaming and on-demand content, the Advanced Entertainment Platform provides a robust content offering to help meet and exceed guest entertainment expectations.

Call 1.844.952.1987 or visit us at directv.com/hotels for more information.



Advanced Entertainment Platform featured. Third-party apps subscription login/required.

*HUB Entertainment Research Source: HUB Entertainment "Tech, TV and Travel" Survey conducted March 2026 with 2,000 U.S. consumers 21+ who stayed five or more nights in hotels within the past 12 months. Availability of DIRECTV service may vary by location. In certain markets, programming/pricing may vary. Hardware and programming available separately. Receipt of DIRECTV programming subject to terms of the DIRECTV Terms of Service. Taxes not included. DIRECTV programming, hardware, pricing, terms and conditions subject to change at any time. ©2026 DIRECTV. DIRECTV and all other DIRECTV marks are trademarks of DIRECTV, LLC.