How to prepare your tourism business for AI

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We hear a lot about Artificial Intelligence (AI), and the possibility of interacting in natural language with self-learning and developing technology-created hype. AI is about to change how we work, learn and consume, and, for the first time in history, humans and machines will work, learn and communicate with each other. These changes will also have an impact on the tourism industry. Travellers may get AI assistance in communicating with travel businesses. AI can enhance and personalise experiences, and tourism companies can automate their workflows and have digital AI colleagues.

Contents of this page

AI will offer opportunities to improve operations and enhance the customer experience, but it also presents challenges in implementation. This factsheet provides tips on how to navigate this exciting but sometimes overwhelming technology. We will introduce AI and explain how you can interact with it and create content. Tips are provided to prepare your business for working with AI. We explain how to use AI to make your business smarter and discuss its challenges and risks. We will conclude with an overview of the key developments shaping the future of AI and what that might mean for you as a tourism professional.

Also, read our Concrete tips to start using AI in your tourism business

Source: image pixels

1. What is AI?

Artificial intelligence is a branch of computer science that aims to create systems capable of performing tasks that typically require human intelligence, such as learning, reasoning, problem-solving and decision-making.

AI and machine-learning have existed for decades. Increasing computing power has allowed tech companies to analyse more data, which has led to big language models that can create content themselves. OpenAI made AI popular by launching its chat interface, ChatGPT, in 2022. In this document, we will call chat interfaces that unlock the power of AI models to consumers AI Assistants and, where that makes more sense, an AI tool or system.

Key Capabilities of AI

- Generating ideas, visuals and creative solutions. (Generative AI)
- Understanding, processing and producing natural language and human-like interactions. (Natural language processing)
- Seeing and understanding the environment, including the content and context of images and videos. (Computer vision)
- Analysing data, detecting patterns and making recommendations. (Machine learning)
- Writing software code independently and creating applications based on user input. For the first time, we have tools capable of autonomously generating other tools. (Autonomous Code Generation)
- Performing tasks autonomously. Recently, AI systems have started to link thoughts and actions together; AI is beginning to reason, plan and execute tasks. (AI Agents)

Video 1: AI Tourism Content Creation: Basics

The impact of AI on tourism

AI will impact the tourism industry in different ways. We have listed some of its most significant possibilities.

Applications and possibilities of AI in the tourism industry.

- Personalisation of travel planning and booking: TripAdvisor's AI trip-planning tool.
- Real-time translation: instant translations in various languages for tour guides like LiveVoice, signage and conversations.

- Customer service with AI bots: Chatbots like Booking.com's AI trip planner deliver 24/7 customer support to manage booking changes and inquiries.
- Speed up research: AI assistants like ChatGPT and Perplexity AI help tourism professionals speed up market research on travel trends and identify market opportunities.
- Content creation and curation: AI helps businesses to create quality marketing content like social media posts or blog articles in minutes. A tool like Crowdriff's Digital Asset Management platform can automatically identify and categorise content.
- Better decisions with analytics: tools like Sabre analyse booking trends, customer demographics and seasonal demand patterns to find optimal pricing, plan resources more efficiently and optimise tour schedules.

Figure 1: Crowdriff's Digital Asset Management Platform uses AI to tag images with relevant and searchable keywords automatically

Source: Crowdriff

AI Tools

With thousands of AI tools on the market and new features and solutions emerging daily, selecting the right AI tool can be challenging. The value and efficiency of these solutions depend on how well your organisation integrates them with other systems and how effectively employees use them. To do this, it is' a good idea to make a plan on how you want to integrate AI into your business once you have developed some basic understanding.

Start your AI journey by understanding how to communicate with AI applications by beginning to integrate the free chat versions of leading AI models like ChatGPT, Google Gemini or Claude to solve different problems. Then, try to identify which workflows could benefit from AI. Find repetitive tasks that can be automated and search for AI solutions that can do this without much technical knowledge and with minimal human intervention. For more guidance on selecting AI applications, see the section tips on selecting AI tools for your tourism business.

Risks and Concerns of AI

AI offers practical innovations but raises concerns about bias, privacy, authenticity, security and sustainability. Before you use AI for your business, we recommend reading our section on the risks and concerns of AI and deepening your understanding of AI through an online course.

2. Prepare Your Tourism Organisation for AI

Implementing AI in your organisation requires a strategic choice: do you aim to be an innovator, or would you prefer to first learn from others and be part of an early majority? In 1962, Everett Rogers created the Rogers Curve (figure 2), which explains how innovations are adopted over time. You can see that relatively few people are innovators and early adopters. The speed of the curve goes faster, but the curve is still valid and applicable to AI and can help you make the right decision. In the European Union, 41% of large corporations are already using AI, while that amounts to 13% of SMEs.

- Being Innovative: As an innovator or early adopter, you must experiment with new tools and ways of working to achieve the desired results. This may require you to try things out and use trial and error, which could involve high costs and demand substantial human resources.
- Being Pragmatic: It can be a good choice to be part of the early or late majority in adopting AI while waiting

for companies to develop ready-to-use solutions. Tools from well-known companies like G Suite, Microsoft 365 or Zoho are beginning to integrate AI and become easier to use. Using AI in familiar applications helps you evolve with new possibilities, lowering implementation costs.

As an innovator or pragmatist, start using an interactive AI model like ChatGPT, Claude or Gemini to learn about prompting. Experiment with combining AI with your company's data and strategic and planning documents to get ideas on how to improve your business and learn about the impact of the latest tourism industry trends.

Figure 2: Using Roger's Curve to Explain AI Adoption for Tourism SMEs

Source: Peter Fabricius & Guido van de Graaf

While you can place your company somewhere in Roger's Curve, the same counts for your customers; if they are innovators, they may expect you to do more with personalisation. If they are laggards, they might not want to have any AI-enhanced experience and could be very worried about their data.

Start with your business needs

Identifying where to start using AI is like hiring a new employee for tasks requiring extra hands. Before posting a vacancy, you will define the role that can positively impact your business. For AI, you will also look at where you can save time and remove repetitive tasks from humans to free them up for more valuable and creative tasks. Consider inquiries, sending standard itineraries, changing booking details or creating content. Analyse where intelligence can make a difference, for example, in developing strategies or plans to make your business more sustainable. You can select the most suitable tool options and maximise time saving or value by listing and prioritising your expectations from a tool. Always try several AI tools to evaluate what works best.

Getting your data ready

AI works with data, and, to fully leverage its potential, ensure that your company's data, strategic documents and guidelines are structured, easy to use and centrally located. Think about which data and documents are needed to optimise a workflow. These include customer feedback, booking data, tourist arrival numbers, and guiding and instructional documents like strategies, marketing plans and SOPs. To easily connect them to the AI, you can store your files in cloud storage platforms like Google Drive or OneDrive, which can be directly accessed by the AI system.

> Tips:
>
> Place company documents in a central location, like Google Drive or SharePoint, for easy access.
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> Structure documents with clear headings and organise data in tables, databases or spreadsheets.
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> Use clear and consistent file names to find documents quickly.
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> Review and clean up your files regularly to remove outdated or duplicate items.
>
> Identify and collect missing data required for your solutions and workflows.
>
> Make sure everyone on your team uses the organised system and AI tools effectively.
>
> Monitor and update your files and data regularly.

Figure 3: Example of a cloud-based organised folder with all documents AI needs to work together

Source: Peter Fabricius & Guido van de Graaf

You can explore the Google Drive setup of this example tour operator Story Safari through this link.

3. How to interact with AI

The power of AI lies in the questions you ask. The more specific you are about your task and desired result, and the more understanding AI has about the context of your company's goals and strategy, the better AI can help you. Learning to work with AI is like onboarding a new employee. It can do great things, but it doesn't initially know anything about you or your company. You first need to teach the AI all about your company and the task it is supposed to perform, and maybe even give it an example. All in a way that is structured and complete. When it comes to areas that are not typically tourist destinations, it is unrealistic to assume that the AI has a lot of knowledge about it. 'You need to feed this information into the AI yourself.

To provide clear and detailed instructions, we suggest you use the RTFCG framework (Role, Task, Format, Context, Goal), which helps structure your prompt and get the desired response. The table below shows examples of how to use the RTFCG framework. Note that AI can be prompted through text, images, voice and, in some models, even video.

Figure 4: Share detailed instructions by following a prompt framework like RTFCG

Source: Tove Antonissen, Peter Fabricius & Guido van de Graaf

> Tips:
>
> Use the CBI market information to help you create strategies and marketing materials targeted at your niche.
>
> A response from your AI tool can be overwhelming. Asking an AI to answer in a maximum of two paragraphs, using bullet points, or another format, helps you process the responses faster and more.

Video 2: AI Tourism Content Creation: Research & Planning

Sharing feedback

When an AI's response is not' what you need, explain what aspects could be improved on or what is' missing in the chat. Do not' hesitate to ask AI for revisions, ask why it came up with the given result and mention when it made a mistake. It can make mistakes when there is insufficient data, it works too fast, it does not' scan an entire document, or maybe it has conflicting instructions. Having back-and-forth conversations and breaking up problems into smaller steps helps AI to understand your specific needs and context, producing better responses. You might be surprised that a machine can work too fast or does not 'work thoroughly. This is because users do not 'want to wait long for a response from AI. Therefore, algorithms decide to take a shortcut where they can to deliver a faster response. In the newer models, you will start noticing that it tends to wait longer and/or describe what it is thinking.

Using attachments and external sources

In most AI models, you can upload files such as research reports, strategic documents or booking data. This is powerful; you can upload market data and insights from trusted sources like CBI and/or your strategy and marketing plans. However, ensure you only share non-sensitive data and always anonymise any customer data before uploading it to an AI system.

Paying for Prompts

You might have seen websites offering prompts that promise to supercharge your research, save you tonnes of time, or even make you money. Whether it's valuable to pay for a prompt depends on its quality. Still, since your feedback on an AI-generated response and the context needed for a prompt to get you a satisfying result is at least as important, you probably want to think twice before buying prompts.

Suppose you want to use AI in your business. In that case, it can be a good idea to get the help of a local company or freelancer to put together a series of prompts that will automate a workflow for you, as this might be challenging to do by yourself and could speed up the process significantly. Before investing, start learning to prompt yourself, try it yourself, understand your problem and evaluate if you can do this smarter using AI. Before contracting out, make sure to make a briefing that states the goal and the problem that needs to be

solved and if the solution should run entirely automatically and thus need to be flawless or if you are willing to tweak the solutions yourself.

Tips:

Start with simple questions to learn prompting.

When chatting with an AI tool, encourage it to ask questions to understand your prompt better.

See AI as a colleague or consultant who can help you.

Use AI to brainstorm by asking for ideas.

When stuck, ask AI to help you.

Do not' expect perfect results. Give feedback and manually edit responses.

Let AI create prompts for you, such as: "Help me to create a prompt to [your task/goal]" in the RTFCG (Role, Task, Format, Context, Goal) and improve it where needed.

Ask AI to review and comment on its responses

4. Create Content with AI

One of the first-use cases for tourism organisations is creating content with Generative AI. Generative AI can create text, audio, photos, images and videos.

Creating content is relatively easy, and many companies are already experimenting with AI-co-created content in their marketing communications. Generative AI can create tailored content in a fraction of the time it takes humans, and it can align and connect content with a strategy and digital marketing plan better than most humans can. It easily links news, stories, products and destination descriptions to your strategy and each other. This creates a cohesive marketing communication that guides travellers from planning to booking. Another thing AI can do superfast is to make different versions of content, each targeted towards its own audience. Making segmentation and personalisation easier to realise.

With one prompt, AI can create dozens of content ideas that align with your strategy. Ask AI for storytelling ideas, blog topics or ways to highlight your unique selling points. Prompts like "Give me 20 blog ideas that will inspire my target audience to visit my destination in the low season" help you get fresh ideas to improve your marketing communication quickly.

Figure 5: Generating multiple versions of a marketing message with AI using a single prompt in Google Gemini

Source: Peter Fabricius & Guido van de Graaf

You might have recognised travel content online that was written by AI. It didn't read authentically, and specific phrases, like "nestled in" and "a tapestry of", often return in AI-written travel texts.

To make AI write more authentically, you must give it instructions, like a tone of voice and strategic guidelines. You can also tune the responses by asking AI to write for a specific audience, such as Generation Y, using the market information documents from the CBI website. For better results, ask different AIs to comment on each other. Let Claude comment on ChatGPT and vice versa.

Using AI-detecting tools and especially good grammar and styling tools like Grammarly can help you improve the text you have co-written with AI to become good English content that doesn't look like it was written by AI and protects your own tone of voice.

Be Aware: AI is known for creating false and misleading information, so always verify if what you create with AI is correct and true.

Tips:

Ask AI to use marketing models, like AIDA, to guide travellers to a sale.

Ask AI to define a clear next step for the traveller with an easy-to-follow call to action.

Ask AI if it sees opportunities for storytelling.

Feed AI with information from trusted sources like CBI to align your content with European market needs.

Develop content step by step; create an outline in bullet points, then write together.

Use templates for types of content like Facebook posts or blogs that you use a lot for a consistent output.

Always check and fine-tune content created with AI.

Store and reuse your prompts and conversations to improve them over time.

To help you get started, CBI has developed a series of videos on creating AI-driven tourism marketing content.

Creating Images and Photos

AI image creation can be very useful for creating avatars, icons, design elements for your website, and supportive images that are not meant to show the destination.

We discourage using AI-generated photos to market your destination or experiences because most audiences prefer authentic visuals that show the experience and beauty of the destination.

Image creators can be found within general AI tools, such as ChatGPT and Gemini, but dedicated image creators, like Ideogram and Adobe Firefly, give better results.

AI is very good at selecting the best images for websites, social media posts and blogs from your image library that align with your strategy and content plan. Larger organisations and DMOs can use more complex AI asset management tools like ASMBL or Brandkit.

Creating Videos

While several video generators are available and are becoming increasingly impressive, most are still largely experimental tools in the hands of non-experts and require work and editing for optimal results.

If you want a glimpse of what is becoming possible, explore tools like Invideo, VideoGen or Fliki

More impressive are AI-powered video editors, which can add AI-generated sounds, centre objects, remove objects and adjust colours. These tools are also very useful for repurposing longer videos and/or images into short clips for Instagram, TikTok and YouTube. Examples include Filmora, Veed and the Canva video editing tool.

> Tips:
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> For the best results, upload strategic and planning documents as context into your prompts. This will help create aligned content that can influence your audience.
>
> Create better content by co-writing with AI; always review its responses. Give feedback and use your tourism expertise to make the content better, unique and authentic.
>
> Use AI for new ways of creating content. For instance, create high-quality podcasts using tools like Jellypod, which can turn your unique destination knowledge into podcasts in less than half an hour. In the beta version of Google NotebookLM, you can even create interactive podcasts where virtual hosts answer live questions from real people.

5. Make Your Business Smarter with AI

AI can help you to make your business smart and efficient. Below, we outline several use cases that show how AI can improve operations.

AI for Research

Using AI tools like Perplexity and ChatGPT can improve and speed up the process of researching new markets, trends or even sales opportunities. These tools can process large amounts of information, extract relevant data, and offer contextual advice tailored to your strategy and business. A good place to start your research is to experiment with AI in combination with CBI's market reports on different niche markets and to include context about your business's unique selling proposition, products and positioning to personalise AI's advice to your needs.

Video 3: AI Tourism Content Creation: Itinerary Improvement

AI for Strategy Creation & Planning

Making strategic and planning documents can be a time-consuming, intensive process that requires knowledge of strategy and marketing models and possibly the help of external consultants. Any SME can process and analyse data with AI, while AI selects the theoretical models that best suit your company. By adding your goals and company context, AI will generate a well-structured strategy with a step-by-step implementation plan and it will actively ask you what needs to be refined.

Table 1: Examples of AI use cases in strategy creation

AI Applications in Strategy Creation	Example
Customer Analysis	AI analyses booking data, reviews and market research to create detailed customer personas that describe your customers' needs and how to reach them effectively.
Strategic Modelling	Using historical data and market trends, AI can forecast different growth scenarios and help to evaluate different strategies before implementation.
Competitive Analysis	AI can analyse the services of competitors, identifying opportunities and competitive advantages.

Strategic Planning	AI tools can generate actionable business strategies and plans, make strategic recommendations, and suggest the next steps for implementation.

These solutions can help your tourism organisation make better-informed decisions using a data-driven advice approach based on internal data and market intelligence.

Using AI for Operational Efficiency

AI transforms how you can work as a tourism organisation by simplifying tasks, such as scheduling and data entry, supporting customer experiences through personalised interactions, and managing resources effectively by optimising resource allocation and reducing waste. For instance, AI can automate booking management, create efficient schedules, and help collect and extract data, allowing staff to focus on strategic or customer-facing tasks.

Saving time and costs with AI and Automation

AI and automation can help your tourism business save time and reduce costs by assisting with the management of bookings, creating schedules and data entry. With automation, you can link different tasks together; you can start experimenting with the integrated task tools in ChatGPT and Claude or you can make them yourself with solutions like Zapier and Make. Using AI tools for repetitive tasks helps to minimise mistakes, improve response times and allows staff to focus on more important strategic or customer-facing tasks.

Examples of time-saving tools include chatbots that help website visitors, automated expenditure and payment tracking for budgeting and cash flow forecasting and extracting actionable insights from call transcriptions. More advanced systems offer dynamic pricing tools that help maximise revenue, itinerary builders, automated reporting or close-out automation.

Using AI in existing office suites and operational software applications

More and more popular tools, like Gmail, Google Sheets, Microsoft Word, Excel and Outlook, are starting to have built-in AI assistants like Google Gemini and Microsoft Copilot, which assist with tasks such as drafting emails, analysing data and creating documents faster.

CRM systems like Zoho and HubSpot now use AI to create better customer profiles by analysing client behaviour and preferences. Zoom can automatically summarise meetings and track to-do actions. Training your team to use these features effectively helps to optimise your existing workflows; use tutorials on YouTube and the companies' websites for the latest use cases and tips and tricks.

Staff onboarding and training

AI can improve training, onboarding and upskilling your team, facilitating a mindset that AI enhances human capabilities rather than replacing them. Encourage your team to use AI and be open about the struggles and benefits of amplifying learning. Acknowledge the anxiety that AI may cause your team, as they may feel that AI could take over their roles.

Customer Service

Chatbots and voice assistants, like PolyAI, are cost- and time-saving tools that enhance customer service teams to be more efficient. They automate solutions for frequently-occurring problems, providing instant chat answers for information inquiries based on your company documents.

Product Development with AI

The key to growing your business is creating experiences your customers enjoy so much that they will share them with friends and family through word of mouth, public reviews or social media mentions. Turning your customers into advocates is and will be the most effective part of your marketing.

The CBI market information document on developing your tourism product suggests creating products that enhance customers' quality of life with meaningful services or experiences.

The reports suggest using the human-centred approach of Design Thinking to create such experiences. This process involves a deep understanding of your customers to find a match between their needs and what your locality has to offer.
Then create ideas, validate them and select the best, after which you start prototyping and testing the prototype.

This process can be amplified and made easier with the help of AI.

Table 2: Phase of Design Thinking and the Use of AI

Phase	Description	Example of AI Usage
Empathise	Understand your customer needs, pain points and desires through research and observation.	Use AI to analyse customer reviews, social media comments and competitor data to identify needs.
Define	Create a persona based on the research phase and link that to what your destination has to offer.	Use AI to create a persona template and fill in a persona profile. Then, with the help of AI, make a list of what your destination has to offer.
Ideate	Generate a list of ideas.	Use AI to brainstorm ideas, create spinoffs from existing ideas and combine existing ideas in unique new ways.
Prototype	Turn the best ideas into prototypes.	Use AI to quickly create an example experience or tour based on generated ideas.
Test	Test prototypes with target customers and gather feedback to improve the product.	Use AI to analyse customer feedback and sentiment from surveys, social media or recorded testing sessions to identify areas for improvement.

Figure 6: Tourism product development suggestions from AI

Source: Peter Fabricius & Guido van de Graaf

Another way of getting product development ideas is to look at what your competitors are offering', let AI analyse their tours and experiences, and ask it to identify ideas that can set your company apart from the competition.

Enhance your products with AI

If you want AI to enhance an experience, consider personalised guidance with video or audio, like instant translations and personalised stories based on interest.
For destinations, AI-guided augmented reality, in combination with AI audio and video-generated tours, can create immersive self-guided tours. Vision AI can recognise an object, and an App could then share a video or audio story tailored to the traveller's interests.

AI is also very useful in helping companies make their experiences more accessible. For Example, Microsoft and Rijksmuseum in the Netherlands collaborated on a project that uses AI to provide audio descriptions for visually-impaired visitors.

Rijksmuseum creates a more inclusive experience for visitors through the use of AI

Source: YouTube Rijksmuseum

Tips:

Let AI identify market gaps with less competition and brainstorm ideas for new experiences or itineraries.

Use AI to get feedback on your ideas. Ask questions like, "What might families think about this experience?" or "How can I tweak this experience to appeal more to solo travellers?".

Stand out from your competitors by letting AI compare your sample itineraries to the competition and provide actionable suggestions to help you stand out.

Making your business more sustainable

To make your business more sustainable, you need insights into how your operations impact the environment. AI does a decent job of analysing your company's footprint and your experiences.

Use prompts like "Create a personalised survey for me to analyse my company's footprint and impact on the environment, ask your questions step by step, and then deliver a report with actionable steps to help my company become more sustainable".

If you gather sustainability data, you even create AI-powered dashboards that turn your data into graphs and diagrams and publish your sustainable efforts on your website.

AI can also assist in creating energy-efficient routings, optimising maintenance schedules and helping with waste management.

AI could help destinations manage crowds and protect vulnerable nature and heritage.

Tips:

ChatGPT is surprisingly good at calculating the CO_2-footprint of itineraries, giving companies and consumers insights into the impact of their travels.

Create packing tips with AI for multi-day tours or trekking based on participants' preferences to reduce waste.

Let AI help you understand and fill in sustainability certification programmes and get customised tips on how to apply to their guidelines.

6. Regulations, risks & concerns of AI

AI presents exciting advances in tourism (imagine personalised travel recommendations or real-time language translation during a tour), but it also brings new challenges to the tourism industry. Concerns like protecting visitors' private data, protecting the authenticity of cultural experiences, and activities and ensuring fair competition in the tourism trade as larger businesses gain advantages through AI adoption, all create important topics for discussion. It is important to consider how AI technologies can benefit but also affect local communities, tourism workers and the travel experiences in our destinations. Underneath, we listed some important regulations, risks and concerns of AI.

The EU Act on AI:

The European Union introduced an EU AI act that targets companies and organisations creating and using AI systems. It wants to protect the privacy and well-being of consumers in the EU.

For tourism organisations using generative AI, the guidelines are:

- Be transparent about AI use. You are not allowed to use AI without sharing this with those targeted by AI, like customers or employees.
- Stay within the rules and regulations of the law.
- Use AI ethically, and ensure you don't harm humans.

For a deeper insight, you can use the Future of Life Institute compliance tracker and read this EY article on how to prepare for the EU AI Act.

Security

If you do not' want your data to be shared with an AI system and want to prevent models from training with your data, make sure to turn off the data sharing switch in the settings. Though some AI tools guarantee you that your data is secure, it's still a very good practice to not share any data with an AI system you wouldn't share with a third person; think about passwords, logins, lists of contacts, and other sensitive data unless you are very confident that it's safe, like for example a password manager or your e-wallet.

Privacy

When using AI models to enhance user experiences, always ask for consent. If customer data is used in AI applications that do not directly benefit the customer, ensure all data is anonymised and add to your terms and conditions whether or not you are using AI to analyse customer data.

You also need to consider your employees' privacy and how you, as a company, want to learn together. For example, the fastest way to learn is for everyone to get access to an AI application to record their workflow, give feedback and generate ideas that help the company accelerate towards achieving its goals. But will employees be comfortable with that? What happens when AI is able to do something better than an employee? You could imagine employees sabotaging the AI system to protect their jobs if you are unable to create benefits for everyone using AI.

To work together with AI fairly, it is a good idea to be open and transparent and create a shared vision with your team on how the company uses AI. In the future, certification organisations like Travel Life may come with guidelines on how a tourism company should use AI responsibly to keep its certifications.

Hallucination

Generative AI is known for its hallucinations, though they're getting less now that the AI models are getting more advanced. Hallucinations are still common when you let AI write in detail about destinations and experiences. AI fabricates amazing-looking things to do or reasons to come to a place with facts that don't exist.

Hallucinations occur more often in destinations that are less travelled and described because AI does not have enough information to work with.

See Figure 7; the itinerary looks perfectly fine. However, the details of the lodges' entertainment are partly made up, even though they look very convincing and true.

Figure 7: An itinerary in Zambia for Family Travelers made with ChatGPT

Source: Peter Fabricius & Guido van de Graaf

Double-check hallucinations by asking ChatGPT to confirm if the information is correct and proofing it with a link.

Figure 8: Prompt in ChatGPT to check if it's hallucinating

Source: Peter Fabricius & Guido van de Graaf

And then, when AI does its 'fact-checking', we get different family entertainment based on facts, with the link to the website.

Figure 9: Updated Response ChatGPT – showing activities Flatdogs Camp

Source: Peter Fabricius & Guido van de Graaf

Tips to prevent hallucinations:

1. Make sure you feed AI with enough data and context.
2. Ask AI to stay factual; if it misses context, it should ask you for clarification.
3. Let it check its own responses.
4. Control AI responses, especially when you share them with customers.

Biases

AI is trained based on human-created content. That content can be biased and have discriminatory opinions about races, ages, genders and minorities.

There is a big difference in how different AI models deal with biases; Google is known to be more careful than OpenAI. It's important to be mindful of this, especially if inclusion is high on your agenda. Then you must actively ensure the model's responses are inclusive; for example, ask AI to make the manager in a story a woman.

When you create personas with AI, you may notice they contain stereotypes from the country of the persona. AI also tends to keep focusing on conclusions from previous research.

If you notice this behaviour, correct it and ask for the set of instructions it works with so you can adjust them to your liking.

Video 5: AI Tourism Content Creation: Social Media

Energy Use

AI systems use energy, and the total amount of energy used to train an AI model is significant. As an end user, a chat varies between 0.1 and 4.32 grams depending on the AI model and the different available research conclusions. A total of 4.32 grams means that 15 questions are roughly the same as 1 hour of television.

You can reduce your footprint in AI by choosing the mini or older version when doing simple tasks in a Generative AI programme since they have smaller footprints.

The environmental impact depends on the AI data centre and how green they operate. Depending on how smart and efficient they are with cooling water and if they use renewable energy. This varies for different data centres. Companies like Microsoft and Nvidia, which recently developed a highly energy-efficient mini supercomputer, offer promising solutions. The energy required for AI is rapidly decreasing per unit of computing, per chat, and for training models. But we are just at the beginning of the AI revolution. The use of AI by people will grow so much that it will become one of the biggest energy-consuming services in the world. Inform yourself about the sustainability practices of AI companies on their websites.

Being Transparent

When using AI in your marketing communications, mention this in your website's privacy and/or sustainability statement. Clearly state when texts are fully generated by AI without human interference, and do the same for AI-generated images, especially photorealistic ones.

Tips:

Test AI tools properly before using them with customers. Be sure to check AI-generated content before it goes public.

Only collect the most important information from customers, be transparent about how you are using AI in your business, and protect your customers' privacy.

Use AI to speed up routine tasks, but rely on personal service for important communication.

Be conscious of the environmental impact of AI tools and use AI to become more sustainable.

7. How to choose the right AI tools

Selecting the right tools that benefit your operations and customers requires time and planning. The options are almost endless. Evaluating your AI tool choices can reduce implementation costs, save the most time, and minimise the risk of choosing the wrong solution. The process is the same as buying new equipment for your business: you want a reliable, cost-effective tool that suits your specific needs. The following guidelines will help you choose the right AI tools for your tourism business.

Business Impact and Value

Search for processes in your business that have bottlenecks or constraints that can be improved with more intelligence. Analyse your daily operations to define where AI could save the most time or enhance customer satisfaction.

This could include answering customer questions, creating social media posts, making customised itineraries or managing bookings. Choose AI tools that will help speed up these processes or solve problems for which your team lacks time.

Getting Started: Cost and Ease

Experiment with easy-to-use tools, and evaluate free trials to check their suitability. Look for solutions within a set budget and realise that some tools have a double pricing structure that includes their software and the use of an external AI model they build the tool around. Calculate the costs per user and verify whether the tool can scale with the growth of your business. Check the amount of support you receive for learning to use the tool and the availability of tutorials and support materials. Remember that training your team to get the most out of the tool will take time and will come at a cost.

System Compatibility

Ensure that the AI tool can work together with the software and systems you use, like your booking suite or customer database. If you are unsure, ask the provider about its compatibility. The tool should improve and speed up your workflows without adding extra complexity.

Table 3: Popular AI tools and examples use cases for tourism businesses

Name	Example use cases
AI Assistants for Diverse Business Optimisation	

ChatGPT	OpenAI was the first big AI company to create its own chat interface. It created a competitive advantage in communicating with AI and is still the market leader. You can use ChatGPT to co-create unique itineraries, answer customer queries, translate text, brainstorm innovative marketing campaigns, and much more.
Google Gemini	Google approaches AI as a multimodal system, integrating video, speech and text. This means that the system can see, speak and write, allowing Gemini to give direct feedback on a streaming video and anything your computer screen or mobile device sees. The solutions you can create with this are almost limitless. Besides that, it can do everything ChatGPT does, but it has a stricter bias policy, making it sometimes less creative. A big benefit is that it brings AI into Google Workspace.
Claude	Claude can be interesting if you want to be more creative. It is' good at presenting data in an easy-to-read manner, including diagrams and charts. Use it to understand lengthy supplier agreements, itineraries or government advisories and receive clear, actionable summaries. Quickly identify key details, like payment terms or regulatory changes, without needing to comb through pages of text manually.
Microsoft Copilot	Microsoft's Co-Pilot, which is part of its 365 packages, is integrated into all the office applications. Create AI-powered budgets, itineraries and proposals directly in Excel, Word and PowerPoint.
Perplexity	Perplexity is created as a smart search engine and a competitor of Google. It is good for research and helps to stay up-to-date on travel regulations, emerging market trends or what competitors offer by analysing them when you ask to. It presents content from the web pages it finds in several ways, like summary, highlights, source citation and help asking the right follow-up questions.

Copywriting and Text Generation

The benefit of using copywriting tools compared to the AI assistants above is their built-in templates, tone-of-voice assistance for unique content, and ability to quickly generate content for different audiences—tasks that need to be done manually in the AI tools above. With these tools, it's easy to create aligned and targeted content for all your marketing communication.

Rytr	Generate catchy captions, compelling ad copy and short blog posts to promote your tours across digital platforms.
Jasper	Load your brand assets and product details to generate tailored marketing campaigns at scale, including emails, landing pages and social media posts.
Writer	Maintain a consistent, professional tone in all communication, from automated emails to website copy, ensuring your brand always sounds cohesive.
Grammarly AI	Help your team write faster and more confidently while keeping a consistent brand voice. Perfect for creating itineraries and emails.
Design and Multimedia	
Canva	Design brochures, flyers and social media graphics with easy-to-use templates, AI-assisted suggestions and a consistent brand.
Pictory	Turn tour photos and testimonials into short promotional videos to share across your social media channels.
Visme	Create interactive itineraries or sales presentations with professional visuals for potential clients and partners.
Productivity and Automation	
Fireflies	Automatically record and organise meeting notes, making sharing summaries with your team easy. Use AI to summarise meetings, saving time and keeping everyone aligned. When you record and save all your meetings and put them in a central place, it's easy to let AI analyse patterns or ideas mentioned in meetings. Good ideas often get lost in meetings, and AI can help resolve this and help accelerate innovation in your company. You could also think about automatically sharing important outcomes or actions with people who were not in the meeting.
Notion AI	Streamline workflows, manage projects and build an internal knowledge base to store key business information. Use AI to extract details about your stored data quickly.

Reclaim AI	Efficiently manage your schedule by allowing Reclaim AI to prioritise and auto-schedule tasks and meetings. Ensure that important activities are planned in appropriate time slots.
Sales and Customer Service	
Chatbase	Chatbase lets you create a custom chatbot that instantly answers customer questions using your business's information, saving time and improving customer satisfaction.
Hubspot	A complete and integrated AI-powered platform that integrates sales and marketing functions, helping to manage customer relationships, automate communication and analyse customer interactions to improve service quality.

Tips:

Test new AI tools during a free trial period with predefined tasks, like using ChatGPT to write tour descriptions or Canva to create social media posts.

List your three most time-consuming daily tasks and select an AI tool to address one of them. For example, if you spend hours answering basic customer emails, start with a customer service tool.

Read user reviews on platforms like Capterra and G2 to see how other businesses rate different AI tools and identify potential challenges before purchasing.

Choose AI tools that already understand travel industry terms and concepts. When testing them, try tasks like creating itineraries or answering common tourism questions to evaluate their performance.

Calculate the tool's value by comparing its monthly cost against the time saved. For instance, if a tool costing $50 per month saves you five hours of work each week, it's a good investment.

8. Prepare for the Future of AI in Tourism

The future of AI in tourism is exciting; it will change how people work, how customers will communicate with your business, and how we all will experience travel. The changes brought by AI are more intense than most inventions. The widespread use of AI will lead to system changes, as we also saw with the arrival of the internet and mobile phones. Think about how knowledge and information became accessible in remote parts of the world. The change mobile finance brought to communities. Or the ability of tourism SMEs to reach their customers directly across the world without the need for an intermediary.

Figure 10: Digital White Board in a remote school in a small village tucked away in the Annapurna Mountain range of Nepal

Source: Guido van de Graaf

However, not all travellers do direct business with tourism companies abroad. This is mostly because of convenience, trust and people's fears that something might go wrong. Where convenience might be further solved with AI, fear and trust are barriers that are more difficult to bridge.

The forecast is that almost everyone will eventually use AI to make their lives easier. According to Statista, the number of Users of AI tools in the EU in 2030 will be around 50% of the population. Big corporations like Microsoft, Google and Apple will all add AI to their mobile phones in 2025, and AI is popping up in more software we are using and devices like TVs and home speakers, leading to the organic spread of users.

AI will support, enhance and improve personal and business decisions and human creativity for these users. Letting AI run parts of our lives independently means a significant shift in trust and habits that might take a long time, as we can also read in this article where a user of Meta AI glasses struggles using it. Humans also have higher expectations from technology; we forgive people when they make mistakes but expect technology to be flawless. A reason why self-driving cars have already been on the roads for several years but are still not allowed to drive in most places.

AI developments are also going faster than most people and organisations can keep up with. Average humans are not flexible enough to absorb the changes and adapt to the radical new ways of working with and interacting with artificial intelligence this fast. The same counts for most organisations; change goes slow and step by step. We can't implement new working methods every other month, but AI systems learn fast and will create constant improvements available for people to use. This could mean that organisations that find a way to adapt to these changes have opportunities to come up.

Predicted massive disruptive changes, like humans getting more free time to travel and robots doing all our work, might take much longer than AI leaders expect. Nor is it likely that everyone will become jobless; the new opportunity to go from segmentation to hyper-personalisation will create more work and more opportunities for those companies that carved themselves a unique niche. Different types of consumers will want different ways for companies to interact with them. As a result, tourism companies need to develop strategies on how to communicate with and serve customers who want to use technology in different ways.

To adapt as a tourism professional and organisation, you must stay flexible and open to new ideas, be willing to keep learning, and consciously try to break old habits and replace them with smarter ones if available.

While younger generations often adapt quicker to technological changes, they may lack the foundational knowledge and experience necessary to ask the right questions or improve the responses of AI compared to tourism experts from older generations. Creating a balanced team that understands both worlds could give a competitive advantage.

Key trends shaping the future of AI in tourism

- Language models are now multimodal. This means that we can move away from text input and talk with AI systems like we do with Alexa and Google Home, and even better, talk to an avatar on a screen that can also observe your emotions and actions. Communication with AI will feel like communicating with a human, with the benefit that AI has unlimited patience and will ask questions when you are unclear, making it easy to instruct and work with them.

- AI agents and automation: AI agents are autonomous tools capable of complex tasks. They can go online, click buttons on websites and fill in forms just like humans do. AI Agents can code their own software solutions, creating dedicated tools to solve any problems they encounter. The idea behind agents is that you can solve complex tasks with a tool by giving instructions in a natural way. Solutions could be virtual assistants that plan trips, update schedules and manage bookings automatically.
- Automation through recording: Tools like Google AI Studio make it possible to record and then replicate all actions people perform on a computer in a way we know from recording macros in Microsoft Office. It can record how you navigate the internet, enter data into a CRM, send your email, etc. This means that AI can analyse very quickly which tasks are repetitive; after seeing this twice, and it could take over the next time this task occurs. Many human tasks on computers can be automated when such systems record over longer periods of time. The loose tech for this, like recording in Google AI Studio and letting AI click on website buttons with Axiom, is already available; the question is how people will implement it and whether employees will be willing to share what they do with such systems. As a company, you need to start thinking about how we learn together with such AI systems and how we, as a team, all benefit from this.
- Hyper Personalisation as the future standard: AI will revolutionise personalisation by combining customer data with tourism organisations' product range. AI tools will communicate one-on-one with customers, while websites may adapt completely based on who is viewing. Additionally, digitally enhanced travel experiences can adjust to individual preferences and behaviours in real time. The technology to do this already exists; the output quality currently stands at about 75%-80% of a human level, and needs to reach about 95% or higher to become widely accessible. Businesses will then be able to offer ultra-tailored recommendations, itineraries and services that elevate customer satisfaction and loyalty.
- AI reaching Human expert level: OpenAI and Claude's CEOs assume that AI will reach human intelligence expert levels in 1 to 3 years. This means a lot of tasks can be done better by AI than by humans. This might take longer, and we have seen more hypes like, for example, the internet bubble, where CEOs were way too optimistic about worldwide change. As a tourism professional, this means you need to start thinking about the impact of this on the world around you. Follow thought leaders like Peter Syme for the latest insights to help you understand the impact.
- Changing user interfaces: Websites and systems will be more user-friendly and allow people to interact with them using text, voice or video calling.
- Global Reach Available for more people and companies: AI can facilitate the sharing of local rural experiences and products with the world, enabling tourism businesses in these areas to reach a global audience even if they don't speak English. Local stories, products and culture can be promoted without the need for an extensive network or marketing skills.
- Connected travel services for better customer experiences: AI will help to seamlessly link travel services like flights, hotels and activities.
- AI will make virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR) more accessible: AI will make the creation of virtual experiences cheaper and more realistic. VR and AR let travellers virtually explore places before visiting or experiencing a location as it was 100 years ago.
- Running AI systems on your own network: We are starting to see the first people using AI systems on their local computer networks; Meta, for example, sourced its AI Llama model, and there are more companies doing this and or letting their AI models run locally like Microsoft with Phi. And recently, the world has been shocked by the open-source model of DeepSeek, which is free for everyone to download. Running an AI model on your own network allows for a full fine-tuning of the model towards your organisation's needs and requirements and could solve privacy and security issues related to sharing your data with models like ChatGPT that use the Internet and take your data to their servers. At the moment, running your own AI system is complicated and technical, but this will become much easier in the upcoming years and doable for the bigger tourism companies and destination management organisations.
- AI will join the workforce alongside human colleagues: AI colleagues will participate in meetings and be a part of teams as if they were human. Some may take the form of humanoids, which are AI-powered robots serving customers, as already seen in some restaurants and hotels. These robots are becoming surprisingly affordable even for SMEs making them cheaper alternatives than humans.

Figure 11: An article on Forbes.com in January 2025 introduces companies and costs of humanoid robots

Source:

Challenges to anticipate

Tourism is big about interacting with humans; you want to balance automation with a personal touch. Human interactions without any tech might be very attractive to some, offering a way for businesses to stand out.

Consider per use case whether a human enhances an experience and where tech can be a better solution.

Be aware of AI misconceptions: while AI can do great things, it is important to focus on tools that have a clear, proven benefit and avoid getting caught up in unrealistic expectations.

Be careful about AI charlatans: companies will try to make fast money, and we offer much cheaper solutions than competitors. These might not be very reliable, especially when there are few human-written reviews. Also, train your team to recognise AI-caused fraud; it's relatively easy to clone voices that might trick you into something.

Ethical considerations: Protect customer data and be transparent about how AI is used to build trust with clients and partners.

Peter Fabricius / Bonfire and Guido van de Graaf / VTP Digital Marketing carried out this study on behalf of CBI.

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