



Fellows Broadsheet

The Institute of Hospitality Fellows Broadsheet is a thought-leadership article written by a member of our esteemed College of Fellows. Celebrating the wealth of professionalism, knowledge and expertise within our diverse, worldwide hospitality family. The Fellows Broadsheet is published exclusively for members.

The Role of Artificial Intelligence (AI) – Who is really serving you?

Monica Or FIH, has been a member of the Institute of Hospitality for over 30 years, since being a hospitality student. As a past chair of the IoH London branch, prior to its regional network restructure in 2022, she continues to be an active Fellow and actively supports the Institute with her hospitality work across industry and educational establishments.

In this Fellows Broadsheet Monica looks at **The Role of Artificial Intelligence (AI) – Who is really serving you?**

When I first started working in hotels, a property management system was the main computer system that was used for bookings and checking guests in and out of the hotel. Back in the day this was revolutionary.

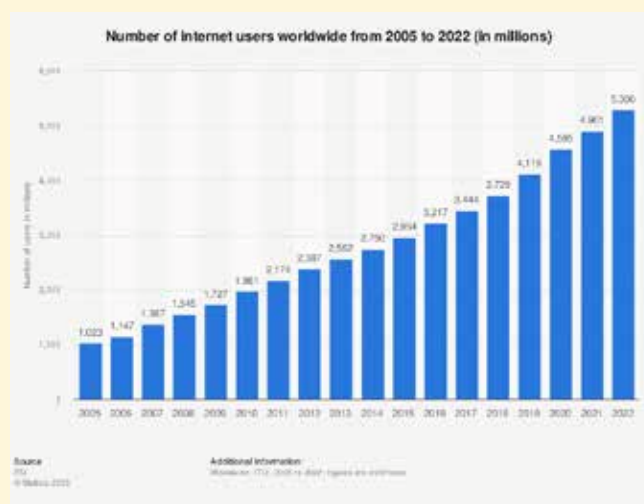
However, advancement in technology is rapid, as can be seen with the internet, social media and now artificial intelligence (AI), which is used in our everyday lives whether we realise it or not.

According to Petroysan (2023) there are 5.3 billion internet users worldwide, which represents 66% of the worldwide population.

Social networking is one of the most popular online activities worldwide, and according to Dixon (2023), Facebook is the most popular online network based on active usage.

In the first quarter of 2023, there were over 2.9 billion monthly active Facebook users, with an average of 33 minutes spent daily on the platform. This was followed by TikTok with 32 minutes and Twitter with 31 daily minutes.

So, why is this relevant? Well, if you have ever wondered how your computer or smartphone instinctively knows what you are interested in when you are using the internet or social media, its AI. Deep behind the scenes AI is at play and is now becoming commonplace.



What is AI?

AI refers to the ability of a computer or machine to mimic the competencies of the human mind to understand and respond to language, decisions, and problems, often learning from previous experiences. These AI capabilities, such as computer vision and conversational interfaces, have become embedded throughout various industries' standard business processes.

Popular applications for AI and machine learning include improving customer experiences and generating customer insights, as well as the newcomer of generative AI such as ChatGPT, which is taking the internet by storm.

How is AI used in the Hospitality Industry?

In 2018 I wrote a white paper called 'AI Meets Human Hospitality' which was based on the findings from a workshop I ran at the World Travel Market and a follow up webinar that was hosted by Revinate, SiteMinder and IDEaS to hoteliers around the world.

During the workshop, when looking at research of what aspects of AI excite the consumer the most; this was compared to our guest journey staying at a hotel:



Applications of Artificial Intelligence that excite consumers the most	Guest Journey Equivalent
36% call centre bots or avatars with natural language capabilities to deal with any enquiry	Pre-Arrival/Booking
50% fully autonomous vehicles	Arrival
60% to provide home security - unlocking of doors	Check in
30% houses and offices that react instinctively to users needs	Guest Bedrooms
54% personal companions and assistance - ability to look after people	During the stay

Pre-Arrival – chat bots on our websites

Arrival – driverless cars bringing our guests to our hotels

Check In – facial recognition to unlock doors

Bedrooms – temperature control, use of tablets, voice activation

During the stay – personal companions - Hilton has Connie the AI Concierge, Radisson Edwardian, has Edward the AI chat bot, Aloft have Botlr to pick up and deliver guest amenities.

All the above are just some examples of how AI has been gradually introduced and trialled in our hotels.

According to AltexSoft (2022) AI is now being used in the following ways:

- For personalised recommendations, based on users tastes and preferences
- Computer vision to select the best photos to show off your property
- Dynamic pricing to sell at the optimal price and maximise occupancy
- Virtual assistants and chatbots to assist with guest enquiries
- Sentiment analysis understands the emotion behind the text for example in reviews. It is an excellent marketing tool and is also used to analyse the competition
- Fraud detection, such as unauthorised charge backs and vetting guests.

How does ChatGPT fit into this?

ChatGPT is trained to follow an instruction in a prompt and give a detailed response. The acronym GPT stands for Generative Pretrained Transformer and is currently a free chatbot which is already considered the best AI chatbot currently available.

According to McKinsey & Company (2023), ChatGPT can be used to create new content, including audio, code, images, text, simulations, and videos.

The Access Group (2023) demonstrated how ChatGPT could be used to generate menu ideas, create social media posts, assist with marketing emails, research and analysis and be an intelligent chatbot for customer enquiries.

Expedia already integrates artificial intelligence and machine learning throughout its platform to create a seamless experience from planning to post-booking and has recently built a plugin for ChatGPT. This allows the traveller to start a conversation directly on the ChatGPT site and select the Expedia plugin to bring a trip to life. When they're ready to book, they go straight to Expedia.

How can AI be used in your business?

AI has many uses, particularly in a hospitality business. It can be used to facilitate bookings, support the pre-arrival process with personalised recommendations, streamline the check in process, gather and analyse customer feedback for operational insights, optimise workflow of staff and maximise revenue.

But let's not put all our faith in technology. AI should be seen as an additional tool to add value to your business, and should work alongside your staff, as part of the behind the scenes support process. As your staff are; and always will be the only ones that can deliver the true hospitality experience.



About the author

As the founder of Star Quality Hospitality Consultancy, Monica is a consultant, trainer, Amazon best selling author for her Star Quality Hospitality Books which are available in the IoH Book Shop, and international speaker for the hospitality industry.

Her work and involvement in the hospitality industry include:

- Hospitality Consultancy and developing aspiring Hospitality Managers
- Fellow of the Institute of Hospitality and past Chair of IoH London
- Licensed WorldHost™ Trainer - Transforming Customer Experience
- Springboard Ambassador
- Institute of Hospitality Mentor
- Published author, conference host and speaker in the UK and Internationally
- Hotel judge for Tourism Awards in Essex and Bournemouth



References and further information

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