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Duff on Hospitality Law

Agoda Makes Its Move Into Agentic AI

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Good Sunday afternoon from Seattle . . . Our weekly Online Travel Update for the week ending Friday, October 30, 2026. I hope everyone celebrating had a great Halloween. This week's Update features a few perspectives on Agoda's recent agentic AI announcement (one of many over the past few weeks) and a newly announced FTC investigation into possible personalized pricing schemes by our friends in the airline and shared transportation industries. Enjoy.

Agoda Announces New Connection with Muse. With last week's announcement, Agoda becomes the first "regional" travel platform to connect with Meta's agentic AI offering (a role currently played by Expedia in North America). Users of the Muse App and website in Singapore and Japan can now search, book and manage travel within Agoda via Agoda's AI travel assistant. Connectivity, at least in Singapore, is via a direct connection. Notably, the announcement failed to disclose the economics of the relationship, particularly, who might be responsible for payment of Mark Zuckerberg's cut of the transaction. Last week's announcement by Agoda (and others) underscores the importance for hoteliers to consider the AI practices of its distribution partners and how hoteliers' valuable content (rates, rooms and other property details) may be used to affect AI and AI agents' booking practices and to redirect bookings away from direct channels. Distributors may tell you that there is currently too much uncertainty around AI to agree to appropriate guardrails on this subject, but I disagree.

AI Agents and the Changing Booking (Re-Booking) Landscape. Last week, I raised a number of questions about Booking Holdings' recently announced investment in AI travel startup, Vayo. Among my many questions was the question about how Vayo and its efficiency mandate might affect hoteliers' revenue management policies and practices (and associated booking terms and conditions). If Vayo (and other recently announced AI agents) is able to continuously monitor room rates and then immediately cancel and re-book when rates drop at scale, how might these practices affect hoteliers? *PhocusWire* featured an article this past week addressing that very issue (I always love it when I am a few days or even a week ahead of the major industry newsletters). As look-to-book ratios or cancellation numbers rise (and systems are overwhelmed), how will hoteliers view these new channels and the travelers that rely on them?

Newly Announced FTC Probe Lands Close to Home. Last week, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) announced a new investigation into the personal pricing practices of several companies, including Delta Air Lines, United Airlines, JetBlue, Lyft and Uber. The probe comes only a few months after the FTC's newly proposed enforcement policy around the use of personal information to set individualized pricing. The probe not only seeks information on how personal information may be used to set pricing, but also how such information may be used to set workers' compensation. Each of the target companies have 45 days to respond to the FTC's request for information. Companies that fail to respond can be compelled to respond

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via federal court. With new "surveillance pricing" rules being adopted at the state level, expect to see these kinds of efforts at the state level as well. Those attending last month's Destination AI Conference in Washington D.C. will recall that I cautioned that legislative, regulatory and enforcement efforts (whether public or private) around so-called surveillance pricing should be at the top of hoteliers' list of regulatory concerns for 2027.

I hope everyone has a great first week of November.

Agoda Becomes First Travel Platform Regionally to Seamlessly Connect with Meta's Muse
October 28, 2026 via Agoda
Digital travel platform Agoda is now available as a connector in Muse, Meta's personal AI agent that was launched in Singapore today. Agoda is the first travel platform regionally with an active Muse connector, giving users another way to access Agoda's travel offerings.

Personal AI Assistants Could be Re-Shopping 'Landmine' for Hotels
October 28, 2026 via PhocusWire
Here we go again. Just as the hotel sector starts to figure out how artificial intelligence (AI) search works, along comes another development: the rise of personal AI assistants.

Agoda Plugs Into Meta's Muse in Singapore and Japan
October 28, 2026 via Skift
Agoda gives Booking Holdings a foothold in Meta's Muse in Singapore and Japan, while Expedia holds the hotel slot in North America. The real question is the economics: if Meta takes a fee, hotels could pay twice for the same booking.

FTC Launches Personalized Pricing and Compensation Inquiry
October 28, 2026 via U.S. Federal Trade Commission (FTC)
The Federal Trade Commission today ordered nine major airlines, ride-sharing companies and food-delivery firms to provide detailed information that will allow the agency to study the use of personal data to set prices and compensation.

FTC Probes Delta, Uber, Others Over Data-Driven Pricing
October 28, 2026 via Law360
The Federal Trade Commission is pressing Delta, Uber, Target and a half-dozen other companies to detail how they’re using personal data to set individualized pricing for consumers and compensation for workers, marking the latest escalation of the agency’s growing scrutiny of the increasingly prominent business practice.

Every Link in the Booking Chain is a Compliance Risk-and Now AI Agents Have Added One More
October 27, 2026 via PhocusWire
A traveler asks an artificial intelligence (AI) engine to find a hotel in Boston. To the average consumer,

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booking a hotel is relatively simple. Search by location, select the number of nights and pick the best rate.

Lufthansa Renames Green Fares as EU Tightens Greenwashing Rules
October 26, 2026 via Business Travel News
Lufthansa Group has renamed its Green Fares to “Impact Fares” following the introduction in September of the EU’s new anti-greenwashing rules.

Airbnb's Amex Travel Deal Puts It Inside a Key Expedia B2B Channel
October 23, 2026 via Skift
On paper, Airbnb’s exclusive short-term rental partnership with Amex Travel didn’t change anything for Expedia because it wasn’t supplying vacation rentals to Amex Travel. But Expedia’s Vrbo has begun supplying vacation rentals to other B2B partners, and now the Airbnb deal blocks that potential expansion.

Posted in Online Travel Update

Authored by

Greg Duff

Principal|Seattle

206.816.1470 greg.duff@foster.com

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