

AI, Privacy Bills and Biometric Suits Put Guest Data in the Spotlight

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Hi there, and welcome back to the *Regulatory Check-In!*

This week: Disney patents AI characters that remember guests, Airbnb ends the checkout chore list, a look at where federal privacy legislation stands, San Joaquin Valley voters weigh new tourist taxes your properties should keep an eye on, an influencer copyright win against a travel media firm, and delivery robots run into Illinois' biometric privacy law.

Disney Patents AI Characters That Form Bonds Using Guest Memories: Disney World has received a patent for AI-powered characters designed to build emotional connections with guests by drawing on their memories, and fans are divided. It's a striking example of personalization built on guest data, and it touches several threads we've been following. First, state AI laws are increasingly regulating consumer-facing chatbots and AI companions. Second, regulators are scrutinizing how guest data, including loyalty profiles, is collected and used. Third, the FTC is focused on companies using personal data in ways consumers don't expect. An AI character that remembers and responds to individual guests sits at the intersection of all three. Hospitality brands exploring AI-driven guest engagement will want to watch how regulators treat this kind of data use.

Airbnb Cracks Down on Host Checkout Chores: Airbnb announced it will crack down on hosts who require paying guests to wash dishes, strip beds and complete other cleaning tasks before checkout, a longstanding source of traveler frustration. The policy fits the broader push for transparency we've been following: what guests are told up front versus what shows up later. For hotels, it removes a familiar point of comparison between short-term rentals and full-service lodging.

Federal Privacy Legislation in 2026: 49 Bills and Counting: The IAPP's September 2026 tracker identifies 49 distinct federal privacy proposals across five broad categories, and several have House and Senate companions, so the actual number of bills is higher. No comprehensive federal law has passed. In the meantime, companies continue to operate under a state patchwork that already reaches tracking technologies, loyalty programs and vendor contracts. If a comprehensive bill passes, the biggest question is preemption. A federal law that overrides state privacy laws would give multistate hotel companies one national standard instead of a growing list of state rules. A law that sets only a floor would add a federal layer on top of everything else. Either way, expect new obligations around guest data, loyalty programs and vendor agreements.

San Joaquin Valley Voters Weigh Tourist Taxes on Hotel and Airbnb Stays: Voters from Fresno County to Farmersville will decide in November whether to tax tourist stays at hotels and short-term rentals. It's the latest local push for occupancy tax revenue, following LA's Proposition TC.

Influencer Wins Copyright Suit Against Travel Social Media Firm: A court granted summary judgment to an influencer in her copyright suit against a travel-focused social media company. The court rejected the company's defenses that she had licensed her work and that her claims were time-barred. For hospitality marketing teams that repost influencer or user-generated content, the case is a reminder that informal permission may not hold up. Clear, written license terms matter.

Chicagoans Sue Over Delivery Robots' Biometric Scans: Two California robot delivery companies face biometric privacy suits in Illinois state court. The suits allege the companies' Chicago robots scan identifying information from people nearby, stream it in real time to human operators and use it to train AI models. Why it matters: Illinois' biometric law gives individuals a private right of action with statutory damages, which has made it a favorite of class action plaintiffs. These suits appear to be extending that exposure to people who simply walk past a camera-equipped device, not just customers who sign up for a service. Hotels using delivery robots, smart cameras or facial recognition for security, check-in or access control could face similar claims, even when a vendor operates the technology. It's another entry in the biometric trend we've been tracking.

Until next time.

[Disney World Gets Patent Approved for AI-Powered Characters that Will Form Bonds Using Guest Memories](#)

October 26, 2026 via Daily Mail

Disney World fans have been left divided after the theme park got a patent approved for AI-powered characters that will form emotional bonds using guest memories.

[Airbnb Finally Cracks Down On Hosts Treating Guests Like A Free Maid Service](#)

October 21, 2026 via The Daily Caller

Airbnb announced Tuesday it would crack down on hosts requiring paying guests to wash dishes, strip beds and complete other cleaning chores before checkout, ending a longstanding source of frustration for travelers.

[Federal Privacy Legislation in 2026: The 49 Bills Reshaping US Data Privacy Law](#)

October 21, 2026 via News Channel 12-3-11

The IAPP's September 2026 federal privacy legislation tracker identifies 49 distinct legislative proposals across five broad privacy categories. Several proposals have House and Senate companions, so the actual number of bill numbers is higher.

[Voters From Fresno County to Farmersville to Decide if Tourists Should be Taxed on Hotel, Airbnb Stays](#)

October 19, 2026 via KVPR

From sprawling Fresno County to the tiny Tulare County town of Farmersville, voters throughout the San Joaquin Valley are being asked on their November ballots if tourists should be taxed.

[Influencer Wins Summary Judgment in Copyright Suit Against Travel-Focused Social Media Firm](#)

October 14, 2026 via Vital Law

The court rejected the defendant's affirmative defenses that the plaintiff had licensed her works and that the claims were barred by the statute of limitations.

[Chicagoans Sue Over Delivery Robots' Biometric Scans](#)

October 13, 2026 via Law360

Two California-based robot delivery companies have been hit with biometric privacy suits in Illinois state court alleging that the robots they deploy in Chicago unlawfully scan identifying information from people in their range and stream that data in real time to human operators, using it to train both their own and third parties' artificial intelligence models.

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