

The Growing Influence of ChatGPT on Travel's Future

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Good Monday morning from Seattle . . . Our Online Travel Update for the week ending Friday, October 24, 2025, is below. This week's Update introduces readers to ChatGPT's new browser, ChatGPT Atlas (and its new Agent Mode), and offers varying views on ChatGPT's (and similar AI powered platforms') long term effect on travel, the future role, if any, for today's travel intermediaries and when/how the industry should respond. I hope you enjoy.

Should Suppliers Race to Make Inventory Available on ChatGPT? That's the million dollar question. Faced with successive announcements from OpenAI over the past few weeks, including, the recent introduction of new ChatGPT travel apps from Expedia and Booking.com, hoteliers, short term rental companies and other travel suppliers face a dilemma. Do they push ahead now to do anything possible to ensure their inventory is available in some form on these new platforms or do they wait? Does waiting give early adopters (OTAs) even more of an insurmountable advantage? For some, like Airbnb's Brian Chesky, the answer appears to be to wait (at least for now). Others are convinced that suppliers must move now, and companies like Direct Booker seek to provide suppliers the tools to do so.

Can ChatGPT and Others Like It Reduce the Travel Industry's Dependence on Today's Powerful Intermediaries? Or will these platforms only serve to cement intermediaries' already outsized control and influence? (I'm full of questions this week.) Answers to these important questions also vary, but I tend to believe (as does Brian Chesky and the author of one of our stories below) that OTAs are too large (and too smart) to be displaced by these new AI platforms and if anyone is well positioned to leverage the platforms to their benefit, the OTAs are. Search has not displaced the OTAs (and in fact, the largest search engines and OTAs have a well-documented symbiotic relationship), so why should these new tools, particularly as they become more commercialized.

Introducing ChatGPT Atlas. On the heels of ChatGPT's announcement of its new app store, ChatGPT introduced this past week a new web browser, ChatGPT Atlas, that allows users to use natural language searches to browse the internet. Users can also use the browser to complete certain tasks on the user's behalf through the browser's new feature, Agent Mode. Of course, OpenAI's video demonstration of the new product featured (once again) a travel application as ChatGPT's lead software designer for the project demonstrated the new agent tool being used to complete bookings on Air France. The introductory demonstration and other travel examples (one using Expedia's VRBO platform) are available in the stories below. Atlas is now available in preview for ChatGPT Plus, Pro and Business users.

Have a great week everyone.

Hotels Push Live ChatGPT Integrations as AI Search Goes Bookable

October 23, 2025 via PhocusWire

Following OpenAI's launch of "ChatGPT apps," experts predict that AI search platforms will soon be able to display hotels' real-time availability and rates.

Airbnb's Brian Chesky: ChatGPT Can Distribute Travel, But Cutting Out OTAs Is 'Very Difficult'

October 22, 2025 via Skift

It's the existential issue the travel industry is debating: Will OpenAI and other platforms become travel booking sites? Brian Chesky doesn't think so. Airbnb CEO Brian Chesky said Wednesday that new AI platforms like OpenAI's ChatGPT Atlas browser won't easily replace online travel agencies. "We're all going to ...

ChatGPT's New Atlas Browser Has An Agent Mode - And It's Eyeing Travel

October 21, 2025 via Skift

Atlas debuts with an Agent Mode capable of booking reservations, flights, and more, executives say. OpenAI launched a brand-new AI web browser, ChatGPT Atlas, on Tuesday, and it has a marquee feature: an agent mode that takes actions on behalf of the user - including booking travel arrangements. ...

AI's New Gatekeepers: How Booking.com and Expedia are Hijacking the Future of Travel

October 21, 2025 via PhocusWire

The EU's Digital Markets Act forces the biggest online "gatekeepers" to play fair, but it doesn't yet cover standalone AI assistants-like ChatGPT, Gemini or Perplexity.

Introducing ChatGPT Atlas

October 21, 2025 via OpenAI

Today we're introducing ChatGPT Atlas, a new web browser built with ChatGPT at its core. AI gives us a rare moment to rethink what it means to use the web. Last year, we added search in ChatGPT so you could instantly find timely information from across the internet-and it quickly ...

Airbnb Adds Social Features to Experiences, Expands 'Reserve Now, Pay Later'

October 21, 2025 via Skift

Airbnb has a lot riding on its Experiences business. Adding a social feature is an incremental improvement, not a game changer. Airbnb is making its experiences business more social. For example, guests booking a food tour of Little Havana in Miami can now see profile photos and first ...

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