

Travel's AI Momentum Continues With New Tools From Hilton, Marriott and Amex GBT

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Good Sunday afternoon from Seattle . . . Our weekly Online Travel Update for the week ending Friday, March 13, is below. Given everything else going on the world (none of which is very helpful to travel), it was a relatively quiet week in online travel. Much was written about Amazon's preliminary victory over Perplexity early in the week, but little else gained much attention. Enjoy.

Hilton Introduces AI Trip Planner While Marriott Plans Launch of Conversational Search. Hilton announced this past week that it was beta testing a new AI enabled trip planner ("Hilton AI Planner") that would allow users to use conversational tools to search destinations, hotels and amenities across the entire Hilton portfolio. The beta version is currently available to select users of Hilton.com. Hilton expects to gradually expand the rollout as it improves the platform based on early beta interactions. Marriott plans to rollout similar technology to its website and mobile app in pilot form in the next months and then a wider rollout later this year.

Amex GBT Share AI Enabled Efficiencies. During Amex GBT's fourth quarter earnings call this past week, Amex GBT CEO, Paul Abbot, shared details about the TMC's increasing leverage of AI. Some key takeaways:

- 83% of the TMC's total transactions are now digital transactions with that number expected to increase with the increasing reliance on AI
- Amex GBT expects to launch Egencia AI next month, which will allow users to use natural language queries for both bookings and travel management (all in accordance with applicable travel policies)
- Egencia's current average booking time is 3 minutes, with that number expected to go down as fewer bookings require human intervention

Amazon Claims Early Round One Victory in Ongoing Agentic Lawsuit Against Perplexity. This past week, a U.S. federal district court issued an order temporarily enjoining Perplexity's Comet web browser agents from accessing certain password protected sections of Amazon's systems to complete purchases on behalf of Perplexity users. According to Amazon, Perplexity's failure to disclose its agents' activities on behalf of shoppers and subsequent failure to stop the activity when asked by Amazon constituted computer fraud. The court's order is only temporary, however, while to the two sides continue to argue over the legality of Perplexity's actions. Perplexity has vowed to appeal the order, the effect of which was suspended specifically to allow Perplexity to file an appeal. For those of you interested in the recent order, we've linked to a copy of the court's order below.

Have a great week everyone.

Marriott Sees Middle East Travel Dip, Expands AI Tools

March 12, 2026 via Skift

Marriott highlighted two forces shaping the hotel industry right now – geopolitical volatility and a race to build AI tools that keep travelers inside its direct channels.

Travelers are Turning to AI to Plan Trips - But Hallucinations and Trust Gaps Remain

March 11, 2026 via CNBC

For many travelers, the process of planning their trips is a grueling slog through endless price comparisons and messy browser tabs. Increasingly, they are outsourcing the task to artificial intelligence. About 91% of global travelers rely on AI travel planners, according to an annual survey of 11,000 global users by ...

Hilton Launches Beta AI Trip Planner on Hilton.com

March 10, 2026 via Hotel News Resource

Hilton has introduced a beta version of its AI Planner on Hilton.com, giving travelers a conversational tool to explore destinations, compare hotels, and review ...

Amex GBT Swings to Profit in Q4 with AI-Led Efficiencies in Focus

March 10, 2026 via Business Travel News Europe

Boosted by its completed acquisition of CWT, American Express Global Business Travel reported its revenue in the fourth quarter increased 34 per cent year over year to \$792 million, as CEO Paul Abbott said the travel management company has reached an “exciting inflection point” in its AI strategy.

Amazon Wins Court Order Blocking Perplexity AI Shopping Bots

March 10, 2026 via Bloomberg

Perplexity AI Inc. must for now stop using its Comet web browser agent to make purchases on behalf of shoppers from Amazon.com Inc.'s online marketplace, a court ruled this week. To view the preliminary injunction order, click [here](#).

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