

Voice recognition and travel reservations: audience survey at World Travel Market

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Chaired by Sam Turner, our Sales Director for Hotelbeds Group, the topic up for discussion was “The future of hotel distribution technology” and Sam was joined by panelists Markus Keller, Senior Vice President at Accor Hotels, Jonny Marsh, Co-Founder and Chief Operating Officer at Loveholidays, and Bluecy Zhang, Vice President of Sourcing at Haoqia. Together they explored their views on the challenges and opportunities hotels are facing from disruptive technologies such as artificial intelligence and big data, along with the entrance into the field of new gatekeepers such as TripAdvisor and voice search tools such as Google Home.

To find out more about the impact of voice search tools on travel, during the panel we conducted a survey of the approximately 200 audience members. The results were very revealing:

- Around half of the audience had never booked accommodation or a flight via their mobile device.
- Only 10% of the audience owned a voice activated device like Google Home or Amazon Echo.
- None of those who owned such a home device had ever used it to search for a travel product.

Following the debate, Sam showed his surprise that in a room full of travel professionals no one had experimented with this exciting technology, reflecting that perhaps millennials are the ones currently more used to using mobile or home devices for voice search. Nevertheless, he felt that “whilst it is still in its infancy, this is definitely the way forward”.

To watch the audience survey and see Sam’s response, watch this video recording we made following the panel.

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