

INTERNET

Leading Hotels of the World eases travel research with IBM Watson-powered platform

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View from Hotel Raphael in Paris, a member of The Leading Hotels of the World

By STAFF REPORTS

The Leading Hotels of the World is changing the way consumers conduct travel research with the launch of a platform that can respond to natural dialogue.

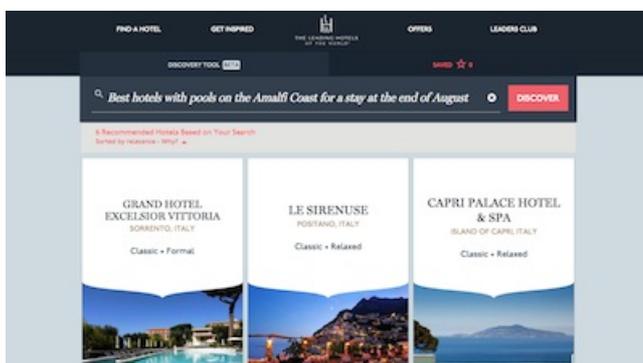
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The chain has partnered with WayBlazer, which claims to be the first cognitive travel platform, to create a trip discovery tool powered by IBM Watson's language processing technology. Currently in a public beta, this may help potential guests find the best property to fit their needs and desires.

Question and answer

A study from Leading Hotels of the World found that 81 percent of travelers conduct their own research online when planning a trip.

Acting as a form of online travel agent, the trip discovery platform contains a search box, where users can type their question. These can be entered in a conversational form, such as, "I want a kid-friendly hotel in Paris."



Screenshot of Leading Hotels of the World's Trip Discovery platform

The tool then combs through the more than 375 hotels in the collection, and shares the matches with the user. These are ranked in order of relevancy.

When a consumer clicks on the individual hotels in their results, they are met with a photo gallery and bullet points

detailing why that particular property may be a good fit. If the hotel meets the searcher's needs, they can check availability and book via a link on the page.

"As we approach our most popular season for bookings, we're excited to collaborate with WayBlazer on this new cognitive discovery tool," said Phil Koserowski, vice president of interactive marketing, The Leading Hotels of the World, in a brand statement. "By adding this functionality to our Web site, we are putting the power of exploration in the hands of travelers so they can effortlessly research and find hotels that meet their individual needs and desires for their trip."

WayBlazer is part of the Watson Ecosystem, and is one of six companies that receives funding from IBM to support work developing the cognitive solution.

"Travel planning can be very time-consuming, and the industry is ripe for more intuitive solutions," said Felix Laboy, CEO of WayBlazer. "By using WayBlazer, The Leading Hotels of the World has become a true digital innovation player by providing customers the choice and flexibility to plan a trip in their own way, increasing loyalty, site engagement and conversion."

Artificial intelligence has also been used to help affluents discover other ideal products.

Yacht brokerage Yacht Harbour is bringing a new type of intelligence to the high-end vessel sales market.

Brook, billed as "Siri for yachts," is an artificial intelligence program that helps an interested consumer find the yacht that best fits her demands. The yacht market can be daunting and difficult to navigate, but Brook will serve usefully as a roadmap to purchase ([see story](#)).

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