

## **'Tech and AI will challenge travel status quo'**

Submitted by superadmincmshb on Fri, 21/04/2023 - 13:51

**Amsterdam, 30 March 2023** - AI, robots and connected apps will improve the efficiency of the travel industry whilst also improving the customer experience, innovation leaders told attendees at the MarketHub Europe by [Hotelbeds](#).

Addressing the audience of 400 tourism leaders in Amsterdam today (30 March 2023), Irene Gómez, Open Innovation Director at Telefónica said: "Tech is blurring the lines between sectors and industries. We call this frontier tech - it's the ability to challenge the status quo. I envisage a future where AI will be my guide when I travel," added Gomez. "It will know my preferences such as what type of hotel I choose and what I like to do when I'm in a new city. It will also give me advice on how to navigate the transport system and then ultimately, book my entire trip."

Hotelbeds' own 258TB datalake and four billion daily searches provide a wealth of consumer data that is guiding its move to encourage the connected trip across the travel ecosystem. José María Pestaña, Hotelbeds' Chief Innovation Officer, is leading the company's innovation drive to disrupt travel via the TravelTech Lab ([www.traveltechlab.net](http://www.traveltechlab.net)), which is working with start-ups to create disruptive solutions to benefit the entire travel industry.

"As a TravelTech company, it's vital that we not only support the ecosystem to bring their ideas to life, but that we also encourage our partners to embrace new ideas. The traveller of tomorrow will be different and more tech-savvy than the traveller of today. Those who don't stay at the forefront of AI, VR and the next innovation will be left behind."

This view was shared by Ali Beklen, Founder and Managing Partner at HotelRunner, who told MarketHub Europe: "The connected trip is real. Companies across the travel sector need to invest and collaborate together to ensure they are connected and to keep up with customer demand but it's important not to fall in love with your implementations, products and what you own. You shouldn't own it as it will have changed by next year. Companies shouldn't think about what customers need now, but what will be normal in 10 years - will everyone check-in to a hotel with just their photo, which contains all their personal information? And if one is doing it, we all need to."

MarketHub Europe is an invitation-only event attended by the most important Hotelbeds partners from all the key source markets of Europe, the Middle East and Africa.

For more information about the MarketHub Europe, please visit [www.themarkethub.com/europe/](http://www.themarkethub.com/europe/)

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Hotelbeds are global leaders in the TravelTech space, connecting and empowering businesses by facilitating bridges in the ever-changing and expanding travel ecosystem. Our cloud-based technology platforms offer fast and simple access to a global network of travel products, from accommodation to ancillaries and payments, while rich data and intelligence helps to generate demand. By operating exclusively in the B2B arena, we are uniquely placed to drive growth for our partners without competing for the end customer. Our teams of 3000+ experts on the ground provide local expertise and support to boost trading even further, even in the most hard-to-reach

spaces. Our unique blend of technology, data and passionate people serves as a catalyst for B2B travel players aiming to unlock their full potential.

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