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Heading: How AI is Transforming Travel Industry

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The emergence of new technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning has revolutionised the way the travel industry works and opened multiple possibilities and opportunities. The capacity of AI to perform tasks that once required human cognitive abilities makes it especially useful for the travel industry.

AI is the new buzzword for internet businesses, citizen services, e-visa processing, travel sectors and contact centres. It has infiltrated every element of the travel process. Website chatbots, personalized search platforms and in-room virtual assistants are being used to improve customer engagement, boost conversion rates, and personalize the entire guest experience. This has transformed all traditional operational practices and in a very short time.

Today travellers seek different and more tailored experiences. Parameters like comfort, price and expedited services matter more than anything else. To meet new expectations in today's customer-centric business spheres, the service sector has resorted to machine learning and advanced technology. Interestingly, various advanced concepts like speech recognition, language translation, auto response and visual perception are breaking different business verticals. Initially, when AI was relatively unknown, many industry veterans across the globe anticipated it would lead to huge disruption of operational practices. That fear was clearly unfounded. Most industry players are now completely aware of the usefulness of machine learning in providing enhanced and faster services.

Companies in the travel sector are making a sustained investment in artificial intelligence and machine learning to make their processes more efficient and easier for governments as well as travellers. The visa industry, for example, is



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using AI and machine learning for online appointment booking, mobile biometric services, e-visa and allied contact centres. As the global e-passport and the e-visa market continue to grow, AI will drive processes to help provide higher levels of service.

It is estimated that by 2020, more than 50 percent of the operations and enterprise data will be managed autonomously. Already, during the past few years' cloud computing, machine learning and internet penetration using AI algorithms have gone main-

stream. Many software professionals and experts are of the view that implementing AI across industries will lead to a rise in potential revenues up to USD 90 billion by 2025.

There is much more to AI and machine learning. Chip technology in the face-to-face environment and 3-Domain Secure (3-DS) tools, which enable consumers to authenticate their identity in real-time and offer greater data exchange between merchants and financial institutions, especially at the time of shopping, can be a game-changer in the visa industry. However, security must be given priority and it should move in tandem with innovation. We must understand that it is not only 'innovation' but 'responsible innovation'. The new technologies we adopt must be secure, especially across the payment ecosystem.

Bridging gaps

These days' operational windows of the contact centre play a pivotal role in addressing visa queries. AI establishes a smoother link between business and visa applicants. Be it selecting your preferred language or anticipating

the queue time, AI voice agents and chatbots can capture granular data from each interaction optimizing the workflow of the contact centre. In need of automatic identification of an existing customer's contact number or fetching any relevant data basis of applicant's reference number, an expedite customer service can be rendered with delightful experience simply by using the AI algorithm.

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Data security

These emerging trends in technology have led to the realization of the significance of privacy and data security. For a global visa, outsourced players, abiding by the directives of data security and embassy protocol becomes integral. Considering the inevitable cyber concerns, it has become crucial for visa providers to increase their security audits, encryption of data and introduce watertight password control systems. Protection of customer and employee data is now the top priority. The privacy policy of the organisation should encompass all details with regard to the processing of personal data along with legitimate grounds of data collection, retention and protection. In our AI-driven future, the key to success will be about using these technologies wisely. **CR**