More travelers turning to AI to plan their holidays, ABTA survey finds
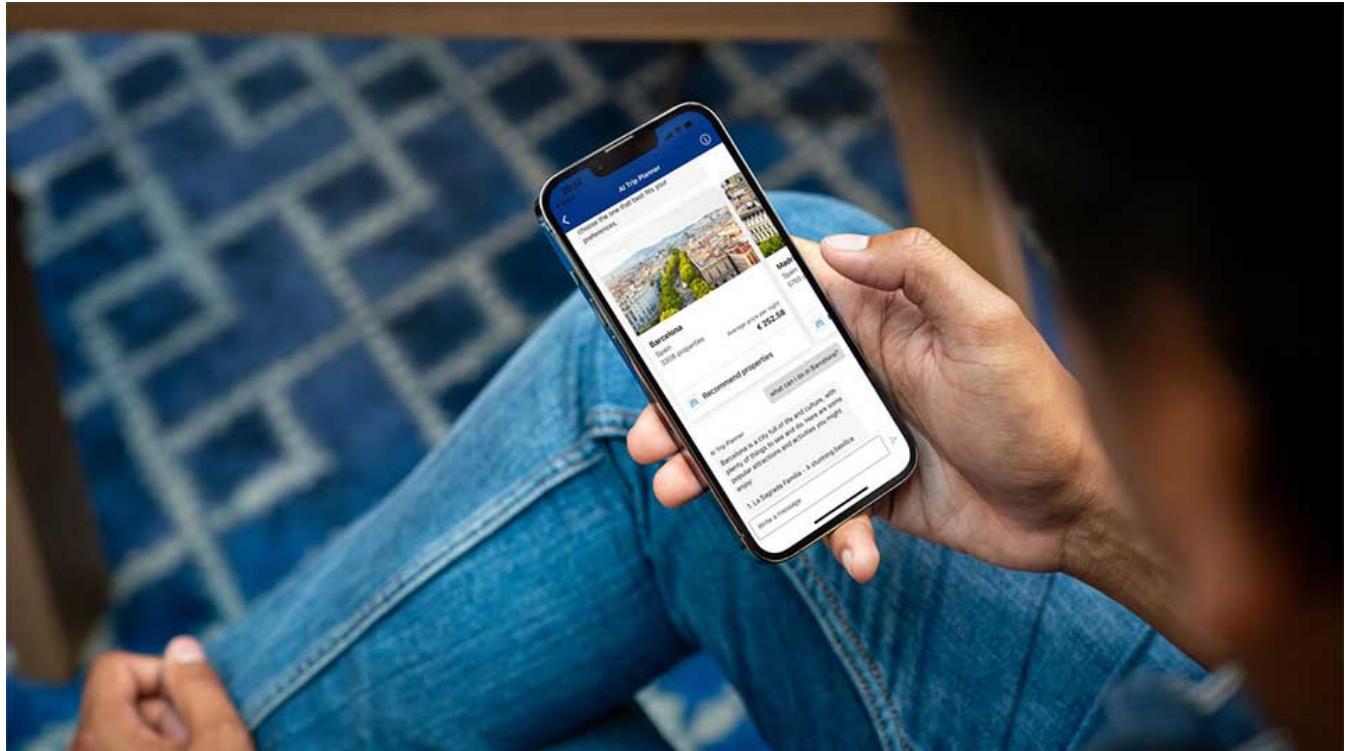
Dhaka: The number of travelers using artificial intelligence (AI) to plan holidays has doubled in the past year, according to new research from the UK travel association ABTA.

Of the 2,000 people surveyed, 8 percent said they now use AI tools for travel inspiration and advice — up from 4 percent in 2024. Travelers aged 25–34 are leading the trend, with 18 percent using AI to plan their trips. Meanwhile, 13 percent of those aged 18–24 and only 3 percent of those aged 55–64 said they rely on AI for trip planning.

The study also found that 43 percent of respondents feel confident using AI to help organize a holiday, and 38 percent would consider booking a trip through AI-powered platforms — a process made easier by partnerships between OpenAI's ChatGPT and travel giants like Booking.com and Expedia.

ABTA Chief Executive Mark Tanzer said the findings highlight changing consumer behavior. "The challenge for our industry is to harness AI's potential while continuing to emphasize the value of personal service and expert advice," he said.

Speaking at ABTA's convention in Calvia, Spain, Jet2 CEO Steve Heapy warned that the industry now faces "existential competition" from automated systems, stressing the need for travel professionals to demonstrate "superior knowledge and excitement" to justify their margins.

TUI UK Managing Director Neil Swanson added that trust remains a key advantage for human agents. "Customers may use technology, but they still want to look someone in the eye when booking. They value that trust element," he said.

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