



From Search to Purchase

How AI is disrupting every stage of travel booking

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Our first-of-its-kind behavioral study for the travel industry tracked 42 users through real-world travel-planning scenarios in Google AI Mode. This research provides the data and insights that travel brands have been craving—not only what actions users took, but *how* they used AI to research and make decisions, from the first search query to hitting the “book” button.

These findings reveal how AI is fundamentally changing how people plan and book travel.

Executive summary

Until now, travel marketers have lacked solid data on how people use Google AI Mode to research, plan, and book travel. The industry has observed clear trends, but evidence of what is happening has been missing.

Seeking to bridge the gap, Propellic teamed up with Eric Van Buskirk, Founder of **Clickstream Solutions**, and Kevin Indig, publisher of **Growth Memo**, to conduct a breakthrough behavioral study that provides never-before-seen insights into the impact of Google AI Mode on travel planning and booking.

Propellic also consulted with global travel market research firm Phocuswright, a subsidiary of Northstar Travel Group, as well as in-destination experience industry leader Arival, for input on the study.

“We agree with Google CEO Sundar Pichai that AI Mode is the future of Google search,” said Brennen Bliss, Founder and CEO of Propellic. “This research provides new insights into how travel research behavior has changed in a short time. For the first time, you can see exactly what users do, how they do it, how much time they spend doing it, what their tendencies are, and how they feel about it.”

According to Phocuswright’s July 2025 report **Chat, Plan, Book: GenAI Goes Mainstream**, 22% of active U.S. travelers using search engines to research and select trip components are already utilizing AI-generated results. Given this early momentum, it’s clear that AI Mode will capture a huge portion of the market as it is rolled out fully. Google is laying the foundation for this shift by actively releasing monetization paths and features to transition their search ads business to AI Mode.

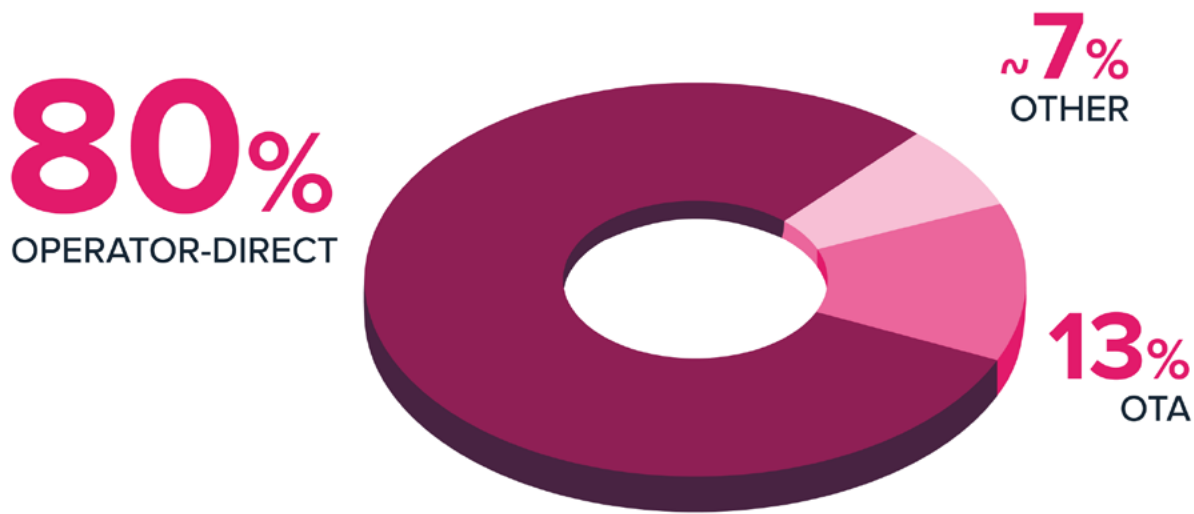
With this research, travel brands and marketers now have an actionable playbook to optimize strategies based on actual AI user behavior.

Key takeaways

Generative AI is the new OTA competitor.

Operator-direct (~80%) dominates OTAs (13%) in observed flows in AI Mode.

AI Mode visibility is making it difficult for OTAs to defend against direct suppliers.



Google business profiles are the new “above the fold.”

More than a local business listing, a Google Business Profile is a travel storefront and a go-to information resource. When a local pack or inline link is clicked and opens a Google Business Profile, users dive into photos, reviews, pricing, and the website.

Conversations replace keyword searches.

AI Mode accelerated the shift from short, fairly generic search prompts to longer, more specific chat prompts that turn into full-blown conversations. Travel brands need to adapt to become part of the conversation and win bookings.



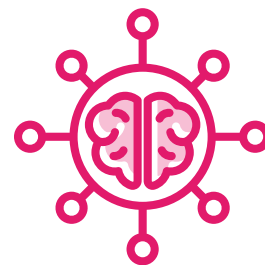
People trust information from AI.

With post-task accuracy trust ratings exceeding **4.3 out of 5**, consumers expressed confidence in the information generated in AI Mode. Travel brands with AI visibility and valuable, relevant content inherit that trust.



AI Mode is the travel planning concierge.

Users spent significantly more time in AI Mode on planning tasks (**average ~104 seconds**) than booking tasks (**average ~38 seconds**). Users linger, explore, and compare options in AI but move quickly to book elsewhere once they've made a decision.



Get inline to get clicked.

Inline interactions, especially inline text links, dominate other elements like right panel content and inline images. While these other elements have value, they take a backseat to inline links in AI Mode.



Methodology summary

You'll find a detailed methodology at the end of this report, but here is a brief summary of what data was collected.

We asked **42 participants** to complete seven real-world travel-related queries in Google AI Mode across the full travel journey, from inspiration to planning to booking. More than **300 tasks** were observed to capture diverse user interactions and behaviors, establish statistical significance, and correlate this data to produce relevant insights.

For each task, participants were asked to:

- Read a task prompt.
- Navigate to Google.com/aimode.
- Enter one or more queries in AI Mode.
- Speak aloud their reasoning and reactions.
- Declare a final answer before closing the task.

“

This kind of study is very unicorn.

Interactions with AI and search results are far more complex than they used to be. The research was really meticulous, producing a depth of quantitative and qualitative data that's groundbreaking for the travel industry. You wouldn't be able to capture this data unless you were looking over the user's shoulder.”

Depth of quantitative and qualitative data

Screen and audio recordings from each session were collected securely through **UXtweak**, an enterprise-level usability testing platform. Transcripts totaled approximately 71,000 words, or about 230 pages if printed. Analysis included but was not limited to:

- Click patterns
- Scrolling
- Hover activity
- Verbatim quotes from transcripts of all participants
- Manual notations (lines of text read, seconds spent in AI Mode for each task, etc)

The study measured things like how people asked questions, which results caught their attention, how often they dug deeper into the Google features, which links were clicked and their position in results, and how smooth the experience felt when moving between Google and outside booking sites.

This methodology made it possible to turn complex, real-world interactions into a clear set of data points, providing a clear structure for understanding not just the outcomes, but the user journey leading to those outcomes.

ERIC VAN BUSKIRK

Founder & Lead Researcher



Clickstream
Solutions



Our findings

FINDING #1

Operator-direct dominates OTAs

Booking path analysis showed that the dominant pathway from Google AI Mode was through the operator of properties or activities, with OTAs being used far less frequently.

Data

Booking path analysis by type

89

OPERATOR OF PROPERTY/ACTIVITY

The official website of the provider itself—such as a hotel brand, airline, or attraction—where you book directly with the operator.

14

OTA

Third-party platforms that sell travel products (flights, hotels, tours) directly to consumers, often bundling options (e.g., Expedia, Booking.com).

8

METASEARCH

Search & comparison tools that scan multiple sources (OTAs, airlines, hotels, etc.) to show prices and options, then redirect you to book elsewhere (e.g., Skyscanner, Kayak).

With an average of just 0.21 clicks per task and a median of zero, right-panel clicks were extremely rare. Maps and local pack features were absent in more than half of cases for the main, left panel, which limited their influence. Many participants reached them via Google business card packs, which opened Google Business Profile cards, which often had maps.

Why it matters

When given the opportunity, Google AI Mode users were more comfortable going directly to the source to book. **Generative AI is the new OTA competitor**, with direct suppliers having a clear advantage in AI Mode. OTAs must take steps to have their value proposition surface inside AI Mode to compete.

While this research studied hotels, activities, and flights, travel marketers in other niches should apply these insights to their strategies.

Takeaways

“

OTAs will need to invest in a solid GEO strategy with AI-quotable content and incentive booking to compete in AI Mode

While direct booking sites have an inherent advantage, it can be easily lost if GEO practices aren't followed. This is an opportunity for disproportionate ROI on a comparatively small budget.”

JAVIER HERNANDEZ

Senior SEO Manager



PAUL TEDDY

Senior Director of Operations

“Direct providers are the big winners. That’s a potential windfall for hotels and tour operators that invest in their own web presence. GEO signals must live everywhere to give AI multiple ways to recognize and surface your relevance.”



FINDING #2

Optimize your Google business profile yesterday

When users clicked a local pack or inline link that opened a Google Business Profile card on the right panel, they spent time viewing websites, reviews, prices, and photos. Optimizing Google Business Profiles to appear above the fold and provide information travelers need is critical as search shifts to AI Mode.

Top-rated bus tours

- Comedy on Deck Grand Canyon Tour: A hilarious, comedian-led bus tour to the West Rim and Hoover Dam, known for its engaging guides and comfortable transportation.
- Grand Canyon West, Hoover Dam, and Seven Magic Mountains Tour: This MaxTour option is a best-seller that visits three iconic landmarks in a single day.
- Big Bus Las Vegas Night Tour: An open-top, double-decker bus tour of the illuminated Las Vegas Strip, with live guides who share stories and history about the city.



Comedy on Deck Grand Canyon and...
4.9 ★ (7.9K)
Bus tour agency
155 W Imperial Ave sui...



Hoover Dam
4.7 ★ (49.9K)
Open · Hydroelectric ...



Seven Magic Mountains
4.5 ★ (16.3K)
Open · Sculpture
S Las Vegas Blvd

Fun-filled adventure and activity tours

- Emerald Cave Kayak Tour: For a refreshing outdoor excursion, take a guided kayak tour on the Colorado River to the beautiful Emerald Cave. The trip is available as a half-day tour with optional hotel pick-up and is suitable for most skill levels.
- Las Vegas Desert ATV Experience: Take an adrenaline-pumping ATV ride through the scenic Mojave Desert. Many tours include hotel pickup and refreshments.
- Taste Las Vegas: Celebrity Chefs & Historic Eats: This walking tour on the Las Vegas Strip is perfect for food lovers. It visits celebrity-run restaurants like Gordon Ramsay's and introduces you to the city's culinary history.

Comedy on Deck Grand Canyon and Hoover Dam Tours

4.9 ★ (7.9K) · Bus tour agency

Overview Reviews Photos



Website Directions Save Share Call

155 W Imperial Ave suite 125, Las Vegas, NV 89102

4.9 ★★★★★ · 7,899 Reviews

Appointments · comedybustours.com

(702) 384-3325

Google review summary

5

4

3

2

1

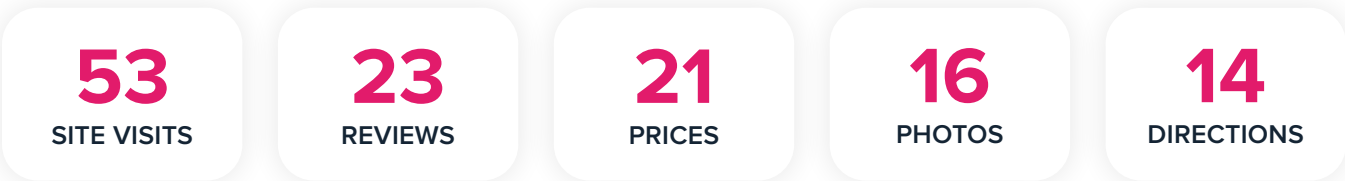
4.9 ★★★★★ (7,899)

"Liked the ample included water and sit down breakfast and food at canyon."

Data

Google business profile activity

A total of 141 unique Google Business Profile cards were opened by study participants. There were 113 total interactions with Google Business Profile card features, including:



First and final click

An inline click is a “dead-end” action. Across the entire study, an inline click was followed by a click for a different feature just seven times. Once users land on a Google Business Profile, they almost never move to another feature.

Why it matters

Google AI Mode mostly delivers text, but **when users click the right panel, Google Business Profiles are popular destinations for travel planning.**

Multi-feature click paths are extremely rare, which means most users commit to one type of interaction per task. If that click takes users to a travel brand’s Google Business Profile, that’s a big step to conversion—if the profile provides the information they want and need.

Takeaways

“

Fix your Google Business Profile immediately—like, drop everything and do it now

Google is embedding these mini-local packs right in the AI response, and users are interacting with them before even seeing traditional results. This isn’t just a local listing anymore. Your Google Business Profile is your main storefront, not your website.”

JEFF RIDDALL

Senior SEO Manager



ERIC WIMSATT

Associate Director of SEO

“Google Business Profile optimization should be a key focus for any travel organization with a physical local presence—hotels, tours, and activities. They need to respond to reviews in a timely manner and regularly post unique, engaging updates related to their products and services.”

FINDING #3

AI Mode is travel planning central

There is a clear split between time spent on travel planning and booking tasks in Google AI Mode. Users ask questions, explore, compare, and refine choices in AI Mode and leave Google to book once they've chosen an option.

Data

Average engagement time in AI Mode

104

SECONDS

Planning tasks

This stage of the travel buying journey includes follow-up questions, browsing multiple results, and weighing options.

Users averaged 38 seconds mid-funnel on cleanliness and trust checks.

Prompt example: "Consider the hotel's cost. Determine if it maintains good cleanliness."

38

SECONDS

Booking tasks

This stage of the travel buying journey included tasks like "start hotel booking," "start tour booking," and "start flight booking."

Scrolling depth patterns

0-25%

Activity tasks ("Pick a top activity")

25-50%

Hotel tasks ("Choose a hotel stay")

75-100%

Tour tasks ("Find a guided tour")

Overall, 0% scroll depth is most common.

Average number of lines read

Based on voice cues & hover activity.

22.5

LINES

Planning tasks

14

LINES

Booking tasks

Why it matters

Deeper research and planning kept users engaged inside AI Mode for a longer period of time. Planning requires about 60% more reading effort than booking as users scan multiple paragraphs of content, not just snippets. Scrolling behavior varies by vertical.

Generally, users slowed down to verify reviews, ratings, and reassurance factors before committing. Engagement for booking tasks was much shorter because users left Google to begin the booking process.

Travelers leaned heavily on AI, using a variety of tools inside the AI Mode environment to build confidence in their choices. They expressed appreciation for options that were clear, definitive, and scannable, which they described as “no guessing” and “laid out.” Once a decision was made, they moved to an external website to make an actual purchase.

Takeaways

“Cleanliness scores, guest quotes, proximity maps—these aren’t nice-to-haves anymore. They’re the mid-funnel proof points that AI surfaces and users expect to see. Design your content to provide this reassurance during the planning phase.”

PAUL TEDDY

Senior Director of Operations



JAVIER HERNANDEZ

Senior SEO Manager

“

High trust and longer dwell time in planning phases let strong brand content shape consideration.

This changes the KPIs we use to measure the success of these types of content, moving away from clicks and traffic and toward conversion rates and branded/ navigational search volume. The upper-mid funnel amplifies brand trust.

FINDING #4

Travelers trust AI

Users were asked questions immediately after engaging in certain behaviors in Google AI Mode, making the results more reliable than a regular survey. High trust ratings across the board show that people have confidence AI-provided information.

Data

Post-Task “I Trust the Accuracy” Ratings

4.3/5

ALL POST-TASK
TRUST RATINGS

~0.65-0.82

VARIABILITY
IN RATINGS

4.58

HIGHEST RATING FOR
“PICK A TOP ACTIVITY”

“Guided tour information” ratings were strong but not quite as well-received as “activity.”

Why it matters

Consistently high post-task trust ratings and very low variability show that people trust the accuracy and usefulness of information provided in Google AI Mode. **Recommendations in the AI environment related to destinations, hotels, and activities are viewed as trustworthy, a valuable sentiment that extends to travel brands.**

However, trust is not unconditional or permanent. Since information from Google AI Mode doesn’t transfer to booking sites, a complicated or confusing booking experience could alienate users and negatively impact conversions.

Phocuswright’s **Chat, Plan, Book: GenAI Goes Mainstream** found that only 37% of travelers trust travel answers from generative AI tools such as ChatGPT. The discrepancy may indicate that travelers have a higher default trust of AI Mode than other AI tools.





Takeaways

“

If your property or tour is mentioned in AI Mode, it gains the trust that users already have in the system, which is a huge conversion advantage.

AI credibility rubs off on brands. Content that reads helpfully, like a travel guide or detailed FAQ, is more likely to be utilized and ranked by AI, whereas pages that feel like thin lead-gen funnels may be ignored or summarized negatively.

JEFF RIDDALL
Senior SEO Manager



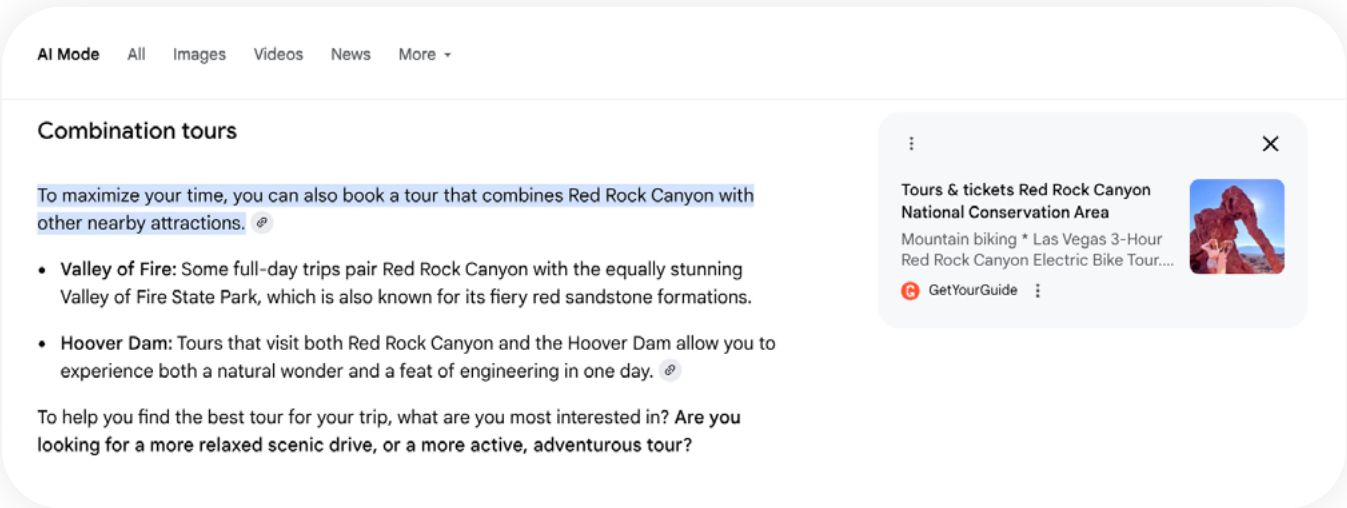
JAVIER HERNANDEZ
Senior SEO Manager

*“The more people trust the information they obtain, the more likely they are to use it. Content strategies should focus on unique, direct, authoritative answers to questions consumers have about products and services. This being said, **if there is frustration with the overall booking process, users may head back to organic search results.**”*

FINDING #5

Inline is prime AI real estate

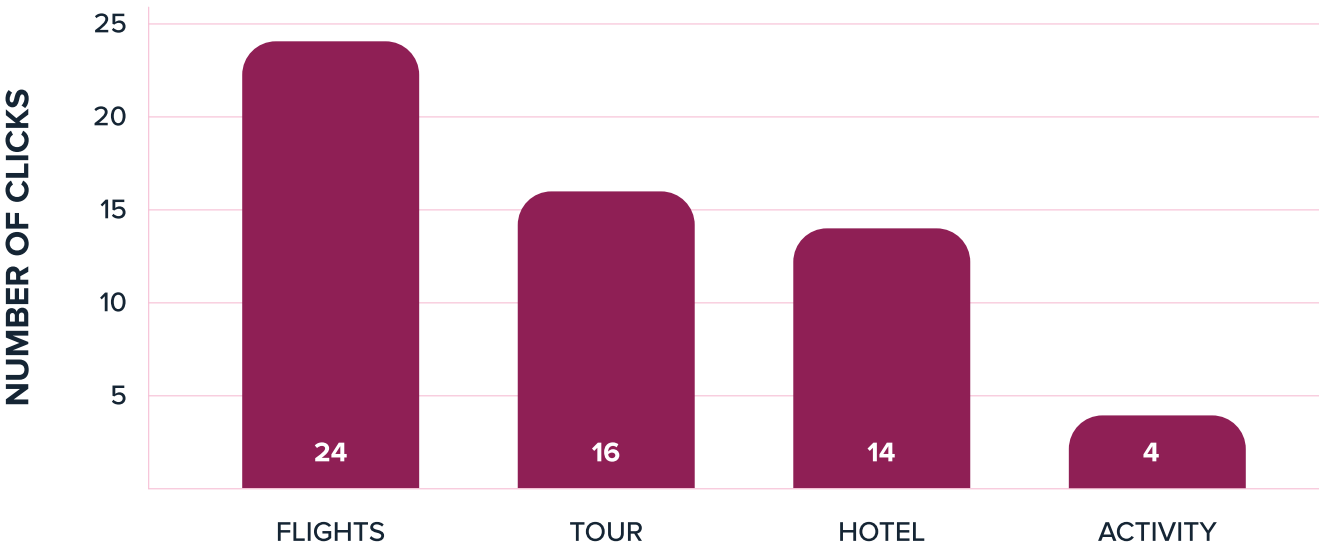
Inline text links and link icon links typically appear in the Google AI Mode text body. These two types of inline links were tracked separately in this study.



Data

A comprehensive AI Mode click-flow analysis shows that inline interactions dominated user behavior, appearing far more frequently than any other flow type combination.

Right Panel Clicks



Why it matters

Users in Google AI Mode tend to click directly on inline text links without exploring other features. Link icon clicks were very rare. Almost all sequences were single inline clicks. Secondary elements like right panel or inline image were far less common, often occurring alongside inline clicks, not as standalone actions.

Users primarily clicked inline results for hotel (“Choose a hotel stay”) and tour (“Find a guided tour”) tasks that led to booking-oriented sites and Google Business Profile cards, with scattered uses of maps, local pack, or right panel. The right panel was disproportionately used for external clicks in the flight task.

In contrast, most “Check hotel cleanliness” or “Pick a top activity” interactions never left AI Mode. **Users found enough information from AI-generated answers and didn’t move to an external booking step.**

Takeaways

“

While the 10 blue links are eventually going away, AI Mode is giving credence to the importance of inline links.

The goal of AI inclusion should be to appear in inline links. These attract the most attention, rather than the citation list on the right. How you appear in those passages that contain your inline citation becomes even more important as travel planning continues to shift to AI.

ERIC WIMSATT

Associate Director of SEO



JEFF RIDDALL

Senior SEO Manager

“Inline text clicks and link icon clicks are being tracked separately, with different rank positions. When AI Mode mentions ‘Death Valley tours’ with that little link symbol, that’s different from a link embedded directly in the text. Link-icon mentions and inline text links behave differently and are being measured for click behavior. This completely changes how we think about link acquisition and mentions.”

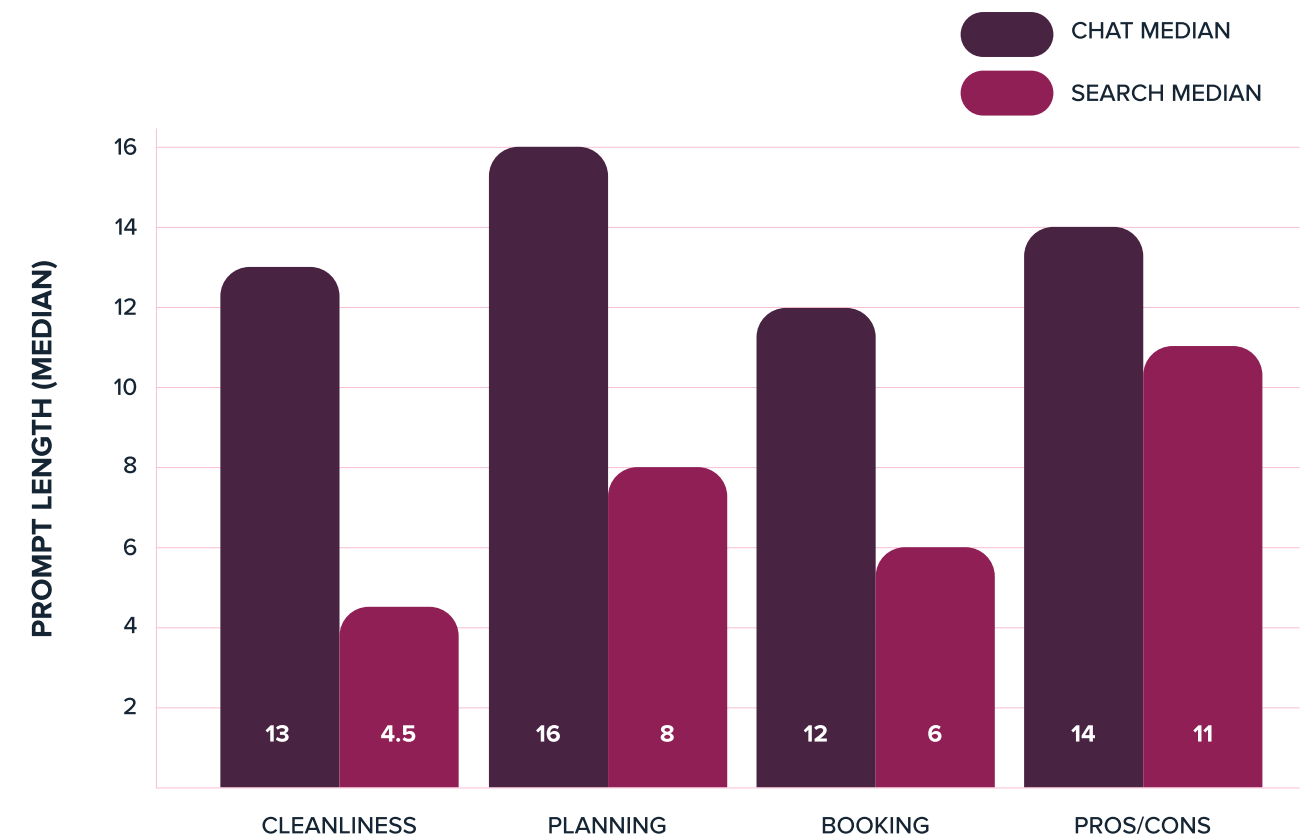
FINDING #6

From keywords to conversations

AI Mode is changing how people interact with Google for travel planning as short, keyword-focused searches are being replaced by conversational queries and chat-based experiences.

Data

Prompt Length



Examples of Chat Prompts

- Female, age 48: “can you provide me a list of things to do? ... Mountain Coasters, that sound really fun.”
- Female, age 31: “I want to go to London... See Harry Potter... sightseeing tour... museums.”
- Male, age 54: “How does La Quinta fare when it comes to hygiene and safety and cost?”
- Female, age 53: “Book a flight to New York City for two adults... in September.”

Why it matters

Chat prompts were at least twice as long as search prompts for all tasks except strengths/weaknesses. **Longer prompts with conversational phrasing reflect more exploratory effort to find information that's valuable, specific, and relevant.**

Users are also phrasing booking prompts as direct commands, treating AI as a transaction engine even though a click to an external site is required to complete a booking.

Takeaways

“

Content strategies should focus on unique, direct, authoritative answers to questions about products and services in well-structured chunks for easy inclusion in AI search results.

In AI Mode, keyword targeting is all but done as the average query length is more than double most searches—no surprise here as we know AI search is a chat.

ERIC WIMSATT

Associate Director of SEO



JEFF RIDDALL

Senior SEO Manager

“This isn’t just search anymore. It’s a conversation with AI about travel planning. The old keyword strategy of targeting variations is on life support. Travel brands still thinking about ‘ranking #1 for Yellowstone hotels’ are missing that users might never see traditional rankings at all. It’s all about being the source AI pulls when constructing its response.”



FINDINGS CONTINUED

More noteworthy findings

The broken handoff (or fumble) to booking sites

Once users completed their research and chose their options, they were universally frustrated when the details didn't transfer to the external booking website. They had to re-enter everything—and they blamed travel brands for this failure. Making the booking experience as seamless and simple as possible is that much more important.

Negative ratings were rare but the few scores of 1–2 were in the booking ease category, which means a single poor booking experience significantly impacted the score. Speed and friction in the booking experience are where satisfaction drops and variation spikes.

With AI as the new GDS, structured data becomes the trade rail

Similar to the previous point, travelers expect conversational booking commands (“Book Hilton Miami for 2 nights”) to pre-populate in external sites. This requires structured data, deep links, and APIs.

Just as Global Distribution Systems (GDSs) standardized distribution in the 1970s, AI will force a new standard as marketing shifts from storytelling to structured story + structured inventory. Suppliers that don't expose machine-readable offers risk being skipped.



AI as a gatekeeper, not a channel

Users didn't expect to leave AI Mode until booking. Many activities and hotel queries were fully answered and resolved within the AI environment. No longer a referral channel like SEO, AI is a gatekeeper that may never send the user to an external website. Winning means influencing decisions before the click, not just after.

Supporting context demands discoverable content

Even in a single task, users may need supporting context (reviews, location, pricing, availability) without leaving AI Mode. Content should be optimized for discovery across different UI panels. Videos can help AI discover your content, but they may not be seen because AI Mode rarely surfaces video for travel. Compelling written explanations improve visibility in AI-generated summaries.

Click-flow tracking could create analytics illusions

Users make their decisions inside AI Mode. Then they click to book and make a purchase. Travel marketers may observe single-session conversions and think their landing pages are amazing when, in reality, much of the customer journey happened before they arrived. Clicks tell only part of the story, but marketers judge activity in Google far too much based on clickstream data and Google Analytics. AI demands more in-depth tracking to accurately measure performance.



Conclusion

AI Mode is the central hub for multiple stages of the traveler journey

When it comes to search, Google AI Mode is the future, not a feature. In fact, AI Mode has already pushed the 10 blue links down the page and taken over the travel planning process. Information is gathered and decisions are made in AI Mode. The only task that requires the user to leave AI is booking—for now.

“For decades, travel marketing mapped campaigns to ‘dreaming, planning, booking,’” Brennen Bliss said. “LLMs blur the phases of the traditional funnel into one environment. The new competition is about controlling the collapsed funnel inside the AI ecosystem. Whoever owns that interaction wins the traveler.”

Top takeaways

OTAs must adapt to compete with direct suppliers.

People trust the information and brands surfaced in AI Mode.

Google Business Profiles matter more than ever for travel brands.

Inline results, links, and activity dominate travel planning.

Users research and plan in AI Mode—visibility here is critical.

AI users value meaningful conversations, not keyword searches.



Perhaps most importantly, people feel good about AI. They like AI. ***And they're never going back.***

“

ERIC VAN BUSKIRK

Founder & Lead Researcher, Clickstream Solutions

These findings align with the AIO research I oversaw with Kevin Indig, which revealed a complex set of behaviors that SEOs missed because they were relying on click data. This study provides a true window into AI's role in the travel buying journey. Multiple behavioral studies have now confirmed that users have a strong preference for AI. That's the way they want to do things.”

The path forward for travel marketers

Yesterday's best practices do not align with today's travel journeys and complex user behaviors. It's time to rethink strategies for connecting with travelers who expect to find all the information they need in AI Mode so they can make decisions with clarity and confidence.

Content across owned landing pages, Google Business Profiles, earned media, and paid media should be structured, designed, and written to align with user questions, behaviors, and preferences. The right data and metrics need to be tracked, and the most relevant insights applied, to land more bookings.

Travel brands and marketers that evolve with user behavior and continuously analyze and optimize their strategies will be in the strongest position to win with AI.

Methodology

Study design

A remote, unmoderated usability study was conducted to evaluate how U.S.-based consumers interact with Google's new AI Mode search features during common travel-planning scenarios. A think-aloud protocol was employed, with participants speaking their thoughts while completing tasks. This design allowed us to capture both behavioral and attitudinal data.

Participants

A curated panel of 47 U.S. participants was recruited from Prolific, an online research platform that connects researchers with a pool of vetted participants. Based on prior experience, we anticipated a small attrition rate (~15%) due to technical issues or incomplete compliance. Our final analysis included 42 participants. Each session lasted approximately 20–30 minutes, and participants received a monetary incentive for their time.

Age groups & participants

- 18-27: 12
- 28-38: 11
- 39-53: 12
- 54+: 7





Task protocol

Participants were asked to complete seven real-world travel-related queries in AI Mode, spanning the full travel journey:

- **Inspiration:** selecting a destination or top activity.
- **Planning:** choosing a hotel, checking cleanliness, exploring maps.
- **Booking:** initiating hotel, tour, or flight reservations.

For each task, participants:

- Read a task prompt.
- Navigated to [Google.com/aimode](https://www.google.com/aimode).
- Entered their query in AI Mode.
- Spoke aloud their reasoning and reactions.
- Declared a final answer before closing the task.

Data capture

Sessions were recorded using **UXtweak**, and an enterprise-level usability testing platform, which collected screen and audio recordings (1080p, full desktop).

Annotation & coding

Trained analysts systematically annotated each recording. They captured both quantitative and qualitative markers:

- **Structural variables:** participant ID, device, task ID.
- **Engagement variables:** dwell time, scroll depth, number of queries, line read.
- **Behavioral variables:** sequence of clicks, hesitation points, reading style, and spoken reactions.
- **Outcome variables:** task success, time to decision, reliance on AI Mode vs. external sites.

All videos were transcribed with a retrieval-augmented generation (RAG)-driven AI knowledge base that connected data to transcriptions of all videos.

Every external website visited was coded and categorized by owner, Metasearch Engines, and OTA. To ensure consistency, spot checks were conducted on 15% of coded sessions.

Statistical considerations

Correlation analyses assume **linearity, normality, and homoscedasticity**. While overall sample size is strong, some variables fall below 100 observations. For those cases, findings reflect associations and shared variance (r^2). They should be treated as directional, a positive movement or direction for a particular change or feature. Directional findings may require further testing, focusing on the reader's audience.

Strengths of the dataset

- **Diverse behaviors:** Data spans search, click sequences, booking flows, and AI interactions.
- **Consistency:** Variables were annotated with clear operational definitions, ensuring comparability.

Reliability tiers

- **High reliability:** Inline text, AI Mode time, and right panel data are strong anchors for cross-analysis.
- **Moderate reliability:** Right panel clicks, chat type question usage, link icons, and local pk interactions (49–74% coverage) are interpretable but noisier, especially when split into subgroups.
- **Low reliability:** Click sequences and niche Google Business Profile card categories (e.g., “Appointments” with only 4 clicks) provide directional but not statistically significant signals.

Study design

Participants: 42 unique participants (identified by PROLIFIC_PID)

Why smaller groups still matter

Even low-frequency behaviors highlight **usability pain points or discoverability gaps**. For instance, the rare “Appointments” clicks signal poor visibility. Aggregating across related studies (travel + brands) may boost statistical strength.

Key takeaway

Consider **AI Mode time, inline text, and right panel clicks** as the backbone for strongest statistical signals.

Key variables for correlation

- Variables with substantial numerical data (≥ 50 observations):
- Task number (317 obs, 100%)
- Word count in first question (222 obs, 72.5%)
- AI Mode time (278 obs, 89.7%)
- Right panel clicks (204 obs, 66.0%)
 - Note: Users often clicked because right panel was the only place to do booking or flight booking tasks.
- Map interactions (114 obs, 36.7%)
- GBP card interactions (136-141 obs, 43-46%)

Key statistical considerations

Correlation assumptions

- **Linearity:** Relationship should be roughly linear
- **Normality:** Variables approximately normally distributed
- **Homoscedasticity:** Constant variance across range

Our dataset challenges

- **Sample size variation:** Some correlations based on <100 pairs
- **Nested structure:** Need to consider participant-level clustering

What it *does* show:

- Strength of **linear** relationship
- Direction (positive/negative)
- Shared variance ($r^2 \times 100\%$)
- Statistical association

Analysis Strengths

Strengths

- **Large sample:** 300+ total observations
- **Multiple behaviors:** Captures diverse user interactions
- **Standardized collection:** Consistent annotation procedures
- **Operational definitions:** Clear variable definitions

Sample size (n) matters for whether results can be considered statistically significant.

Strong statistical reliability

- **Inline text** (Total = 3,451 across 293 checked cases)
 - Large N → averages/medians here are statistically robust.
- **AI Mode time** (Recorded % = 100% in planning, ~83% in booking)
 - Near-complete coverage across tasks → reliable comparisons.

Moderately reliable (borderline significance)

- **Right panel** (Total = 207, Checked = 293 → ~76%)
 - Medium sample size. Can support chi-square or proportion testing, but subgroup splits reduce power.
- **Opened chat/AI question form/link icon/info source/local pack** (Recorded % ~49–74%)
 - Mid-sized proportions with consistent denominators (293). Results are statistically interpretable, but narrower margins of error.

Low statistical reliability (small Ns)

- **Click sequences** (counts of 1–5 per sequence)
 - Tiny totals → no statistical reliability. Still behaviorally meaningful (patterns of how users switch views).
- **GMB card details** (counts: e.g., Overview = 113, Website = 53, Directions = 14, etc.)
 - Uneven Ns. Categories like Overview/Website are reliable enough, but smaller counts (Appointments = 4, Sponsored = 2) are anecdotal.

Why the “weaker” groups are still meaningful

- **Usability studies** often value directional insights over strict statistical inference.
- Even small counts reveal **pathways of confusion or preference** (e.g., only 4 people clicked “Appointments,” but that signals discoverability issues).
- Pooling across Travel + Brands studies increases **N** for these weaker categories, making them more testable in aggregate.

Takeaway

- Use **inline text, AI Mode time, and right panel** for statistically significant cross-analysis.
- Treat **mid-tier percentages (chat, link, info source)** as reliable but noisier.
- Keep **small-N items (click sequences, niche Google Business Profile details)** as qualitative/directional markers unless pooled with brand study data.



Shaping the future of travel marketing is a collaborative effort.
Thank you to our dedicated partners for helping us lead the way.

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