AHLA **htng**

1 Guidelines to Success: Framing MCP and the Path Ahead

As hotels prepare for the AI-driven future of search and booking, it's important to take a balanced, strategic approach. The Model Context Protocol (MCP) is a promising development that may eventually enable direct, real-time connections between hotel systems and AI platforms. However, it's still early - current implementations are limited, and key questions about how AI assistants route booking requests (direct vs. OTA) remain unresolved.

The way travelers search, evaluate, and book hotels is rapidly changing. Large Language Models (LLMs) and AI-powered agents — like ChatGPT, Perplexity, and emerging digital assistants — are quickly becoming the first stop for trip planning. This shift represents both a challenge and an opportunity for hoteliers.

In this environment, success means staying informed, participating in industry dialogue, and preparing your data and systems for integration, to remain nimble as the technological landscape changes. By strengthening your content, ensuring discoverability, and collaborating through groups like AHLA/HTNG to advocate for fair and transparent distribution practices, brands and hotels can help shape the next phase of AI-driven bookings rather than simply react to it.

To stay competitive, hotels must take control of how their content, rates, and availability data are presented to AI systems. This requires a dual strategy:

1. **Open Access to Crawlers:** Ensuring hotel websites can be crawled by reputable bots (e.g., Common Crawl, a nonprofit) so LLMs can learn from your content and include your property in their "knowledge base"

2. **Real-Time Data via MCP:** Feeding accurate, live data directly from your systems into AI tools so information is always up-to-date and reliable

▶ **TAKE ACTION NOW:** PLEASE ENSURE THAT YOUR TEAM WALKS THROUGH THE ACTION CHECKLIST IN SECTION 7 TO OPTIMIZE YOUR HOTEL FOR AI-DRIVEN DIRECT BOOKINGS.

2 Why Hotels Should Care

Combined with strong content strategies and ARI (Availability, Rates, Inventory) optimization, this approach can help hotels protect visibility, drive direct bookings, and build stronger guest relationships in the age of AI.

AI AS THE NEW "FRONT DOOR": Travelers increasingly ask AI assistants for recommendations on stays and experiences within their budget parameters.

CRAWLING SHAPES AWARENESS: If bots cannot access your site, LLMs may not "know" your property exists — or may rely on incomplete third-party data.

LOSS OF CONTROL WITHOUT INTEGRATION: Without both crawling and direct feeds, hotels risk being misrepresented and/or overlooked.

A PIVOTAL MOMENT
Hotels that move quickly can shape their presence in AI-driven travel search before less favorable monetization options become entrenched.

3 The Model Context Protocol (MCP): A Direct Data Channel

MCP is a new standard introduced by Anthropic in late 2024, quickly embraced by OpenAI, Microsoft, and Google in early 2025, that allows hotels to connect their systems directly to AI platforms. Think of it as a bridge between your property's central systems and the AI tools travelers are already using.

Key Advantages of MCP:

DIRECT CONTROL OVER YOUR DATA
Ensure descriptions, amenities, photos, and promotions stay accurate.

BOOSTED AI VISIBILITY
Make it easier for AI assistants to surface your property.

REAL-TIME ARI DELIVERY
Provide availability, rates, and inventory instantly.

GUEST ENGAGEMENT
Allow AI to showcase your unique packages, amenities, and experiences — and recognize loyal guests in a meaningful way.

DIRECT DATA, DIRECT IMPACT
Control your data, elevate your visibility, and deliver impactful guest engagement.

4 Beyond MCP: Tools to Maximize Content and ARI Data

OPEN CRAWL ACCESS
Keep your robots.txt open to reputable crawlers so LLMs can directly ingest your property content.

RICH, STRUCTURED CONTENT
These tools can provide up-to-date high-quality photos, detailed room/amenity descriptions, and local experiences in structured formats.

DYNAMIC UPDATES
Seasonal packages, event tie-ins, sustainability initiatives, and exclusive loyalty-member offers can all be delivered dynamically to enhance engagement and drive greater loyalty.

SMART ARI UTILIZATION
Real-time accuracy, packaged offers, and inventory controls to protect rate parity across distribution channels.

AHLA | htng

5 The Direct Booking Opportunity With AI Agents

When connected properly, AI tools can guide guests seamlessly from discovery to decision through direct booking channels. For years, hotels have been adjusting to search engine optimization (SEO), travel agencies (OTAs), and metasearch. But today's reality is different: AI assistants like ChatGPT, Claude, Gemini, Copilot, and Perplexity are becoming the new travel planners.

ANSWERING PRE-BOOKING QUESTIONS
AI can instantly respond using your own verified content. Travelers are asking conversational questions ("Find me a boutique hotel in Barcelona under $200") and increasingly searching for hotels and getting answers without clicking websites.

REDUCING FRICTION
With live ARI feeds, AI can provide quotes and seamlessly hand them off to your booking engine.

STRENGTHENING LOYALTY
By engaging guests directly in their planning journey, hotels can upsell and capture repeat business.

> **HOW IT WORKS**
> MCP enables AI agents to communicate directly with a hotel's system in a standardized manner — similar to a universal API connector but specifically designed for LLMs.

6 Call to Action

AI isn't the future — it's here today. Travelers are already relying on LLMs and AI agents to shape their choices. By allowing crawlers to learn from your website and using MCP to deliver live data, hoteliers can:

- **SECURE VISIBILITY INSIDE AI SYSTEMS**

- **DRIVE MORE DIRECT BOOKINGS**

- **DELIVER ACCURATE, TIMELY, PERSONALIZED GUEST INTERACTIONS**

- **FUTURE-PROOF — OPTIMIZE YOUR HOTEL FOR AI-DRIVEN BOOKING ENGINES AND MONETIZED SEARCH**

YOUR NEXT GUEST IS ALREDAY USING AI: PUT YOUR HOTEL WHERE TODAY'S TRAVELERS ARE SEARCHING AND BOOKING.

AHLA | htng

7 Action Checklist: Optimize Your Hotel for AI-Driven Direct Bookings

ENABLE AI VISIBILITY

- ❏ Review and update your **robots.txt** file to allow reputable crawlers (e.g., Common Crawl).
- ❏ Verify that your website content (rooms, amenities, location, offers) is **indexable and publicly accessible**.
- ❏ Ensure metadata (titles, descriptions, schema markup) is **accurate and structured**.

STRENGTHEN CONTENT QUALITY

- ❏ Refresh all **images and room/amenity descriptions** with high-resolution visuals and current details.
- ❏ Add **structured data** (e.g., schema.org markup) for rooms, rates, amenities, and location.
- ❏ Highlight **unique experiences, sustainability programs, and local partnerships**.
- ❏ Keep seasonal and promotional content updated.

INTEGRATE WITH MCP (MODEL CONTEXT PROTOCOL)

- ❏ Connect your **central systems (CRS/PMS/Booking Engine)** to MCP for real-time ARI (Availability, Rates, Inventory) delivery.
- ❏ Test your **live data feed** to ensure accuracy and speed.
- ❏ Work with your tech partners or HTNG working groups to support MCP adoption.
- ❏ Establish **monitoring and alert systems** to maintain data reliability.

OPTIMIZE FOR AI-POWERED BOOKING

- ❏ Confirm your **direct booking engine** can handle AI-driven handoffs (links or APIs from agents).
- ❏ Enable **instant responses** to pre-booking questions using verified content.
- ❏ Review rate parity to ensure consistency across all channels.
- ❏ Explore **AI integrations** for loyalty, upselling, and personalized offers.

MEASURE AND EVOLVE

- ❏ Track **AI-originated traffic and conversions** to your booking site
- ❏ Monitor how your property is represented in AI summaries and responses.
- ❏ Participate in **industry pilots and HTNG initiatives** around MCP and AI initiatives.
- ❏ Revisit your digital strategy quarterly to stay ahead of evolving AI models and monetization trends.

QUICK WIN PRIORITIES (START THIS MONTH)

- ❏ Open crawler access
- ❏ Refresh and structure your hotel content
- ❏ Begin MCP integration conversations with your tech partners

▶ **BE DISCOVERABLE. BE ACCURATE. BE BOOKABLE.**
HOTELS THAT ACT NOW WILL DEFINE HOW GUESTS FIND AND BOOK STAYS IN THE AI ERA.

AHLA | htng