The Fast-Forward Tech Stack for 2024

The Hotel Yearbook Technology 2024

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Welcome to HYB TECH 2024 - These are fascinating times for our industry!

Tech Stack

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The world of hospitality technology has indeed been an interesting one since the pandemic. During the pandemic, we saw a few incremental changes but nothing major. If there were one takeaway, then it would have been the shift to a more autonomous guest experience, and if we are honest, there is nothing too wrong about that, depending on the occasion the hotel wishes to give. Move forward to 2023, and we have seen quite a few small and incremental changes, some innovative and some promising to make considerable changes to hospitality.

Let's start with the smaller stuff. There is still the shift towards cloud computing adoption, it is still relatively slow in places, but with a new breed of systems embracing open API, this should accelerate. The days of legacy systems, complicated interfaces and contracts should hopefully be a thing of the past. Cyber security is an ever-present topic, not extremely exciting, but probably the most important we need to address as an industry. Social engineering and phishing still pose a daily challenge that we must deal with, bearing in mind the plethora of sensitive information we as an industry hold.

Seeing the recent announcement from Apple of the vision pro, even though at the moment it seems very overpriced and has some technical flaws (battery life), we have to as an industry, ask what this technology will change especially for our customers. In one article, we have looked forward to 2030; we need to imagine how customers will consume our products. Will a website and some social media be enough or do we need to shift to immersive site visits, virtual reality tours of our properties and then the integration of AI assistants who will plan our trips for us in a heartbeat?

That is the perfect segway into one of the hot topics, AI. Chat GPT and similar products have been all over the news, and quite rightly so. Still in its infancy but growing AI has the potential to disrupt hospitality massively. It will put an end to our long-winded manual processes. Guest interactions will change, and yes, some employees and departments could disappear altogether as the technology becomes more precise.

With that said the most topical discussion we will be having is not about technology at all. It's about people. We all know since the pandemic, the hospitality industry has been suffering from a massive human capital problem. This is the most acute in front-line operations. However, it also applies to our world of technology. Gone are the days when we would recruit people to fix printers and program the POS. Today we need specialists, and lots of them, from specialists who genuinely understand cloud computing, SAAS and open API. We need experts in cyber security to keep us safe. We need data scientists to help us organise and exploit all that data we have sitting in massive data lakes, and to the end, we need people who can help us truly understand how AI can help the industry. These are fascinating times for our industry; we are now seeing a shift from the "it's a people business" to "it's a digital business". For sure, we must never forget what hospitality is genuinely about, but we must at the same time embrace these new technologies and how they can best support us by creating amazing experiences for our guests and also our employees.

Enjoy the read!

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Ian Millar is Manager of Institute of Business Creativity & Senior Lecturer at EHL Hospitality Business School working on the Student Business Projects and delivering hospitality technology courses. His double expertise in the areas of hospitality and information technology sets him at the forefront of new developments in the international hospitality industry. He is Certified Hospitality Technology Professional and a frequent presenter at international IT conferences as well as the author of numerous hospitality technology articles. Ian serves as an advisor to various hospitality technology companies and was a Member of the Hotel Industry Expert Panel for the Singapore Tourism Board advising hotels in the region on best practice technology usage. He is also a mentor for the Metro Accelerator program, advising various hospitality technology start-up companies. He is currently on the HITEC Amsterdam advisory council, organizing Europe's largest hospitality technology conference.

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