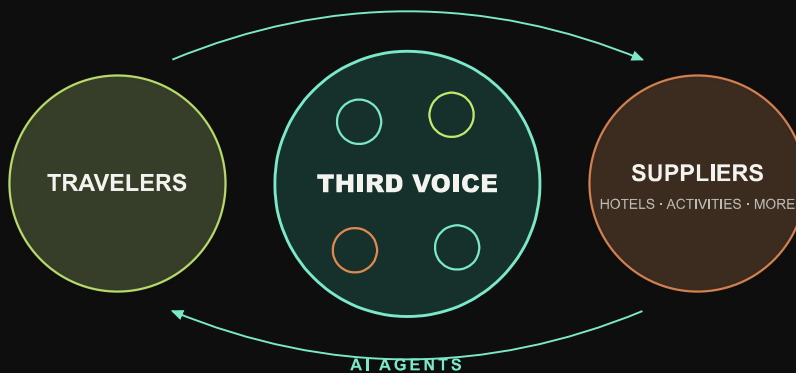




The AI Power Shift

Why the Third Voice will control the future of travel

ABOUT THIS PAPER

This vision paper describes TravelAI's view of the Agentic Network and the Third Voice — the AI layer we believe will mediate the future of travel. Portions of this document describe products and capabilities that are in development or that we intend to build. Forward-looking statements reflect our current intent and may evolve as the technology, the standards around it, and the needs of travelers develop over time. It was first published as an essay on TravelAI.com in February 2025.

Executive summary

The way we book travel is broken — endless searches, overwhelming choices, and hidden biases. But a shift is happening. The rise of AI-powered Agents is transforming travel from a frustrating process into a seamless, intelligent experience.

At TravelAI, we're building an **Agentic Network** for the travel industry — an autonomous AI layer that anticipates what you need, negotiates on your behalf, and reshapes the way travel works.

It is not new or even inflammatory to state that the whole travel market is inefficient. But a Third Voice is emerging — **AI Agents**. These AI Agents are more than chat assistants and virtual concierges; they're deciding, negotiating, and reshaping the entire travel economy. And soon, they will control the customer experience.

The future of travel isn't search. It's AI that works for you. This is The Third Voice.

What happens when AI is no longer just a tool, but an active participant in travel? And the question underneath it all: **who owns the Third Voice?** These are the concepts this paper explores.

In this paper

- **1 Efficiency, the first principle** — why technology exists, and what AI changes
- **2 Our Agentic Network** — marketplaces, Metcalfe's Law, and the third participant
- **3 The Third Voice** — translator, counter-narrative, autonomous decision maker
- **4 Beyond Traveler vs. Supplier** — from static search to outcomes
- **5 The New Marketplaces** — rewarding efficiencies, not exploiting inefficiencies

1. Efficiency, the first principle

Let's start with a first principle: **the role of technology is to reduce inefficiencies.** Since Gutenberg's printing press put a whole lot of monks out of work (and spawned a surge of new jobs and the information age in the process), the world has seen a flurry of efficiency-enabling advancements. After Gutenberg, you had the cotton ginny, the assembly line, the microprocessor, the internet itself, and many other innovations in between. Every one of them was created to add efficiency to existing processes.

AI is also about driving efficiency, and when efficiency is introduced, costs drop and more people can benefit. This is important to us because our goal at TravelAI is to see more people travel (and travel better). More efficiencies in travel will allow more people to travel and spawn all the benefits associated with a more mobile world — what we call "40-year thinking."

Most people in the travel industry have tried tasking the machines to create content, generate images, or automate work that could otherwise be done by a human. This is a great beginning for exploring AI Agents, but it is only a basic starting point.

An AI Agent is an autonomous system that analyzes data, makes decisions, takes actions to achieve specific goals, and — most importantly — learns to improve its own efficiencies, without requiring direct human input.

Agentic Networks are when a series of these AI Agents work together to complete a common objective. It is this next stage, we believe, that creates the biggest shift in a generation — a shift that is now inevitable — and is why we are creating an Agentic Network for the travel industry.

To be sure, TravelAI's vision for a travel-specific Agentic Network is a little different from some others, as is our understanding of the role The Third Voice will play in what is coming next.

THE EFFICIENCY TIMELINE



Figure 1 — Technology reduces inefficiency. Every generational advancement, from Gutenberg to the internet, was created to add efficiency to existing processes. Agentic Networks are the next, and biggest, shift in a generation.

2. Our Agentic Network

To understand our vision of an Agentic Network, it is best to begin with a fundamental understanding of a marketplace and marketplace dynamics. In most two-sided marketplaces, you have Supply and Demand, so the marketplace connects those who want with those who have. Uber connects *Riders* and *Drivers*, while Etsy connects *Handmade Goods* to *Shoppers*. The market maker makes money by facilitating the introductions between these parties — and more often, by exploiting the inefficiencies.

The more Supply and Demand you have, the more value exists in the marketplace. In travel-related terms, ‘Demand’ goes by its more apt name of ‘Travelers’. Similarly, ‘Supply’ can be any accommodation type, activity, flight, cruise, package, and more. This is not a one-to-one relationship: all Travelers can interact with all Supply, and all Supply can connect to all Travelers.

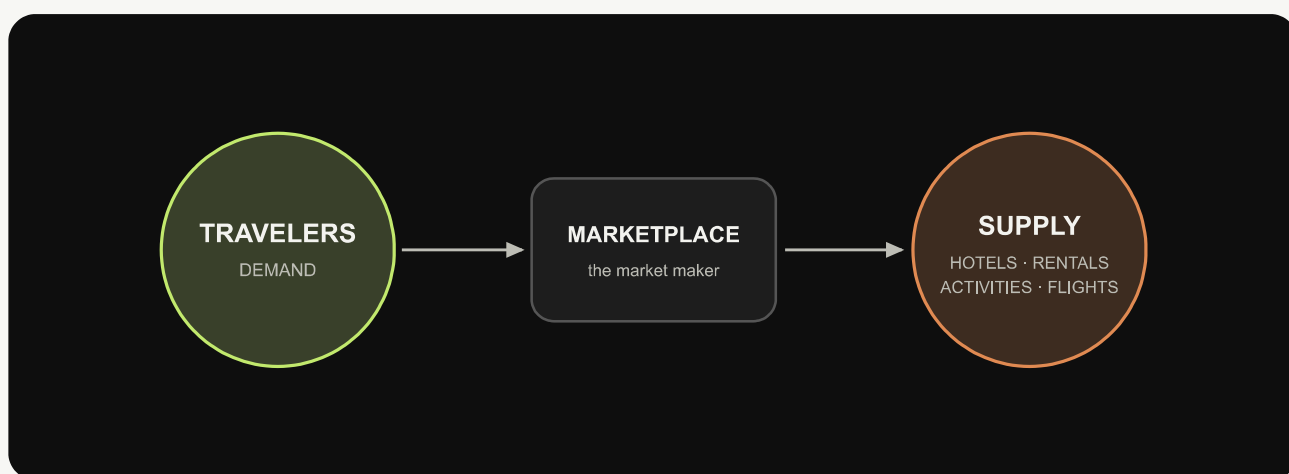


Figure 2 — The classic two-sided marketplace. The market maker connects those who want with those who have — and historically profits by exploiting the inefficiencies between them.

Metcalfe’s Law at work in Agentic Networks

This brings us to one of the least discussed aspects of an Agentic Network: **people focus on the Agentic element rather than the fact that it is a Network** — and thus is subject to the properties of a network.

According to Metcalfe’s Law, the value of a network is proportional to the square of the number of its participants. As more users join, the number of potential connections — and thus the overall value of the network — grows dramatically. The classic example is the telephone or fax machine: basic utility with two nodes, rapidly increasing value with each extra participant.

With many travelers and a lot of supply, immense value is created. As such, many major companies in the travel space have flourished.

But then along comes AI, and it changes everything.

The third participant

In an Agentic Network, you get a third participant: the AI Agent. Unless you have created an adversarial network (and why would you do so in this case), you can align the AI Agents to the same objective as the other participants in the network.

In travel, we have a beautifully simple alignment: Travelers enter the network to find and book travel, while Suppliers participate in the network with the same objective, just focused on their supply. In TravelAI's Agentic Network, the AI Agents we are building are also aligned to the same objective: helping Travelers find and book the "Best" travel for them from participating Suppliers — and do so more efficiently, with lower costs and better value.

AI Agents are synthetic — an infinite number of them can be created to participate, and help, in the network. The more AI Agents you introduce, the more value they provide.

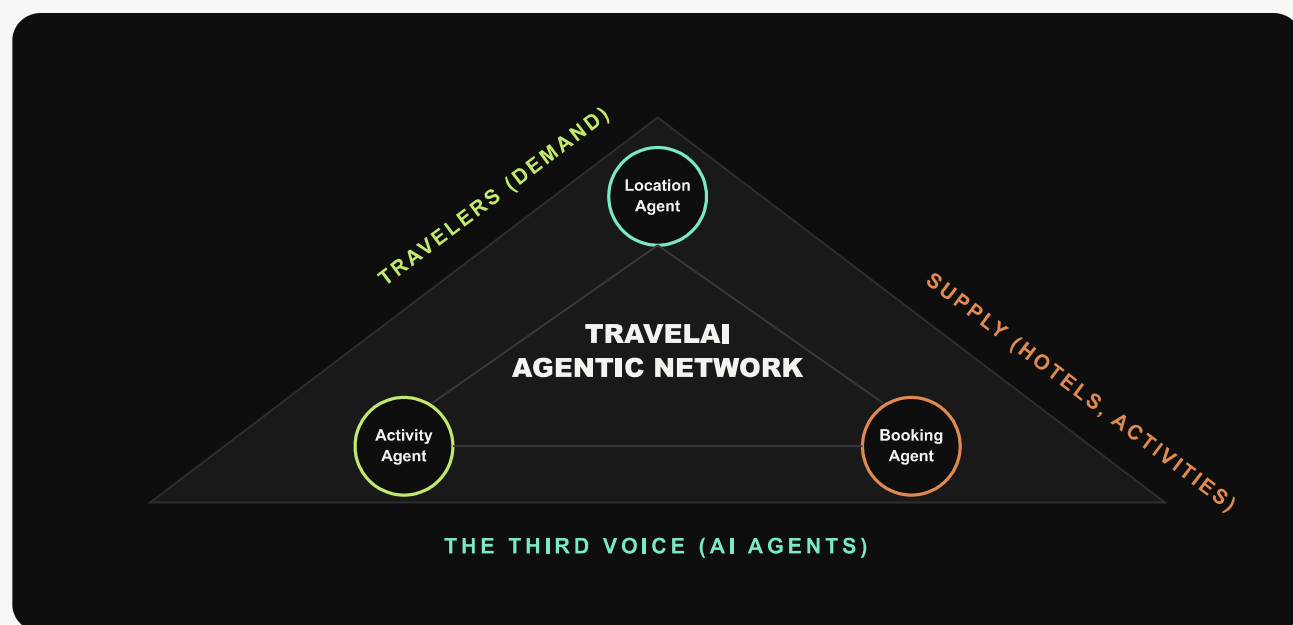


Figure 3 — The TravelAI Agentic Network. A third marketplace participant joins Travelers and Suppliers: AI Agents, aligned to the same common objective — the booking of better travel.

Within our Agentic Network, we are creating AI Agents for every City, Region, DMO, Hotel, Villa, Resort, Activity, Package, Tour, Cruise, and more. We are also creating AI Agents that help within, and across, the network — Ski.bot, Golf.bot, Pickleball.bot, and many more. Agents can provide specific knowledge or services, or be tasked with certain outcomes: monitoring prices, tracking flights, answering questions, and generally doing whatever is necessary to make the travel-related booking more efficient.

We envision a time soon when simple on-ramps will allow individual Suppliers to create their own Agents and publish them into the Network, just as individual travelers will have their own AI Agents acting on their behalf. **No one person or company should be the creator of all the Agents.**

3. The Third Voice

The Third Voice represents a fundamental shift in how information is processed, mediated, and acted upon within the Agentic Network. **The Third Voice is an AI power shift. It doesn't wait for input — it makes good, rapid, coordinated decisions.**

Traditionally, interactions and decision-making have been binary: either human-to-human or human-to-system. AI introduces a third entity — an autonomous Agent that influences, refines, and sometimes even challenges human perspectives. AI does not just relay information; it interprets, synthesizes, learns, and suggests.

The Third Voice can be viewed through three key roles:

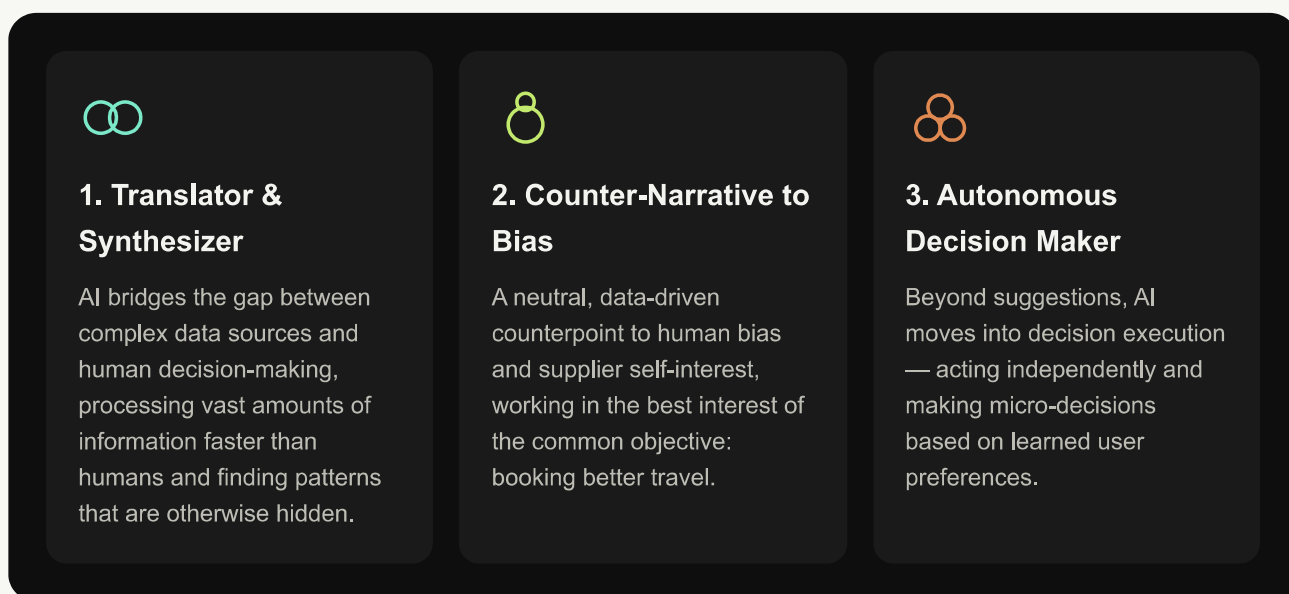


Figure 4 — Three roles of the Third Voice. More than a virtual concierge: an active participant that interprets, challenges, and acts.

1. AI as a Translator & Synthesizer

Example: an AI Agent might analyze millions of booking patterns to recommend the best destinations for travelers based on historical behavior, demand trends, and contextual data.

2. AI as a Counter-Narrative to Bias

Humans make decisions based on cognitive biases, emotions, and limited datasets. When choosing a rental property in Orlando, many of our brands have more than 30,000 choices — an overwhelming amount. And companies have an economic incentive to inform based on self-interest, in the hopes that a traveler picks their offering.

Example: a traveler might think “Paris in July is the best time to visit,” but an AI agent might recommend “Try Lisbon in late September — fewer crowds, better prices, and better weather” based

on dynamic real-time data. Not only can AI Agents counteract overtourism, they can stimulate demand while providing better outcomes.

3. AI as an Autonomous Decision Maker

Imagine waking up to an AI-generated travel plan built just for you. Your TripBot has already booked a flight (based on real-time price drops), reserved a hotel suite (negotiated at 15% below market rate), and scheduled a tee time at one of the top golf courses at your location — all based on your data and ready for human confirmation.

This is not search as we currently know it. This is AI as the Third Voice: making decisions on your behalf, and optimizing for experience, cost, and convenience.

4. Beyond Traveler vs. Supplier

Soon, the AI Agents we introduce into an Agentic Network will be the Third Voice between travelers and suppliers. Instead of a **Traveler** searching for the perfect place to stay and a **Supplier** offering static listings, a TravelAI agent can be the mediating force, optimizing and personalizing results in real time. This shifts the interaction:

FROM		TO
Static search	→	Dynamic recommendations
User effort	→	Automated intelligence
Generic experience	→	Personalized experiences at scale

AI removes the friction in travel discovery and reshapes the traditional transaction-based approach into a more organic, continuously-evolving system where *outcomes* are what matters.

The Third Voice participating in an Agentic Network will be more than a virtual concierge or assistant — it will be an active participant in transactions. This aligns with Agentic AI and AI systems that:

- Have autonomy in decision-making.
- Learn from real-time feedback loops.
- Interact with other AI Agents to negotiate, optimize, and personalize at scale.

There will be a huge step up in service when TravelAI does more than match travelers to hotels but actively negotiates the best deals in real time, acting as a personalized, always-on travel companion

and allowing Suppliers to delight their customers.

Trapped between extremes

For years, travel technology has been trapped in extremes. OTAs like Booking.com, Expedia, and Trip.com operate as precision machines — travelers get exactly what they search for, but nothing more. (Airbnb is a modicum better with its flexible dates and discovery, but it is still effectively a vertical search engine.) Traditional travel agents curate based on their experience, but they are severely limited by personal bias and finite knowledge.

We believe introducing a Third Voice changes this equation. **AI Agents participating actively in a network are neither transaction engines nor human-like advisors — they are both.** They blend precision with personalization, scanning millions of data points while curating experiences tailored to individual preferences, way beyond what a human could process. The result is travel that is as seamless as an OTA, but as tailored as a seasoned concierge.

The Third Voice is not only about working on behalf of the traveler. It also needs to help the Supplier: AI Agents that help set the price for an activity or room night, optimize imagery to drive engagement, or rewrite and express content in different languages. As that neutral third party, the Third Voice shares the objective of *Booking Better Travel*.

SECTION 5

5. The New Marketplaces

Some might ask why we even need an intermediary anymore. If AI Agents become sophisticated enough, why wouldn't travelers just connect directly with hotels, vacation rentals, and activities?

It's a valid question, and we believe the answer depends on who controls the AI layer. If every supplier runs its own AI and tries to keep visitors on their own site, then travelers will still have to navigate fragmented ecosystems. The Agentic Network is different — it acts as the intelligent connective tissue that ensures AI doesn't become just another walled garden.

The AI future isn't about removing intermediaries. It is about removing inefficiencies.

For thousands of years, the world's bazaars existed as the precursor to today's online marketplaces. They connected Supply and Demand, yet the market makers then and now exploited the inefficiencies, often with high fees and gatekeeping. In this new world, we believe those who provide the platform to connect those who want with those who have — with AI Agents actively participating to achieve the same common objective — will be **rewarded by the efficiencies they create rather than the inefficiencies they exploit.**

SECTION 6

6. Who owns the Third Voice?

In the next five years, AI Agents and The Third Voice won't just be assisting travelers — they will be controlling the entire booking process. The key question will be: who owns the Third Voice? If platforms from the large OTA incumbents dominate it, they will dictate what travelers see. If independent AI Agents emerge, they can democratize travel choices, ensuring personalization and helpfulness even over profit-driven recommendations.

The Third Voice in AI will not be a tool — it will be an intelligence layer for the Agentic Web. It challenges, enhances, and optimizes human decision-making. In an Agentic Network, whoever controls the Third Voice controls the customer experience. **This is what TravelAI is building.**

Soon, you won't just search for travel — travel will come to you. Your AI Agent will know when you need a break, when you are available, and understand your personal needs before you do. It will find the best experience, get the best deal, book it, optimize it, and handle every detail in real time. You will then be able to share with other participants and just go.

This future is not decades away; it is unfolding right now. Thus, the key question should not be who *will* own the Third Voice. It should be: **“Will it serve travelers, or will it serve the incumbents?”**

Why not the LLM giants? Why not the OTAs?

It’s tempting to assume that LLM and AI providers like OpenAI and Google Gemini will dominate AI-driven travel, just as we may assume that large OTAs have the advantage. After all, they have the infrastructure and data at scale. However, their challenge is that LLMs are generalists, while traditional OTAs suffer from *The Innovator’s Dilemma*. LLM providers synthesize data, but they don’t own the most accurate, real-time travel information. They still need specialized, high-quality structured data and real-time pricing, availability, and curated travel insights.

We believe this is where a travel-specific Agentic Network becomes indispensable. While LLMs will process language and generate recommendations, they will still need travel-specific AI Agents to power actual decision-making. A good comparison may be Google itself: just as Google relied on businesses to generate marked-up text and structured, SEO-driven content, **AI Agents will rely on structured travel data — and whoever controls that, controls travel in the Age of AI.**

On the other side of the market, in a world where AI makes decisions, whoever controls the Agentic Network controls the traveler. **And in such a world — in which the value of the network increases at the square of the number of participants, including Travelers, Suppliers, and an unimaginable number of AI Agents — the value is infinite.**

WHAT WE BELIEVE

We believe the role of technology is to reduce inefficiencies — and that more efficient travel means more people travel, and travel better.

We believe the Third Voice is the biggest shift in a generation: AI Agents that don't just assist, but decide, negotiate, and act.

We believe AI Agents must be aligned to the same common objective as Travelers and Suppliers — the booking of better travel.

We believe no one person or company should be the creator of all the Agents.

We believe the winners of the next era will be rewarded by the efficiencies they create, not the inefficiencies they exploit.

Soon, you won't just search for travel. Travel will come to you.

John Lyotier

CEO, TravelAI