



AI Is Making Your Cruise More Personalized and Sustainable

By Aaron Saunders

It may sound futuristic, but Artificial Intelligence (AI) is already changing the way we cruise, for the better. On today's cruise ships, AI is enhancing guest and crew experiences, playing a role in reducing food waste, and improving operational efficiency.

As cruise line members of Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA) follow a path to decarbonization with advancements in technology, infrastructure, and operations, AI will be a factor, providing officers and engineers with advanced tools for more efficient operations.

And as digitalization progresses, cruise lines will have more data, which will allow for further customization of the guest experience.

Here's how AI is improving the cruise landscape.

AI starts at the terminal

A decade ago, cruise guests had to print out boarding passes to embark their ship. Now, digital AI technology allows cruise lines, and cruise guests, to go paperless, reducing waste.

AI-driven facial recognition technology is becoming more commonplace at cruise terminals around the world and is improving the passenger experience. Rather than standing in lines for customs and immigration at the end of their voyage, most passengers are now able to pass seamlessly from ship-to-shore, thanks to technology that matches each passengers' face to their given identification.

The same is true for enhancements to the booking process: Generative AI tools are now being used by approximately 56 percent of cruisers in the U.S. and Canada, according to a study done by international management and consulting firm Oliver Wyman.

Princess Cruises, Royal Caribbean, and MSC Cruises have all been early adopters of technology that can not only offer guests what they want, but utilizing AI, can predict the things that are most important to each passenger.

AI assisting in sustainable operations

Cruise executives admit AI isn't there yet when it comes to handling complex service tasks – nor do they want it to be. The human element of service remains crucial to the onboard cruise experience. But where AI can really shine is behind the scenes.

"For most of the cruise world, especially smaller lines, generative AI is not a massive part of the cruise experience," said Gregory Ross-Munro, CEO at digital product development firm Sourcetoast, during a panel at the annual Seatrade Cruise Global conference in Miami in 2025. "I think that is going to change very quickly, though."

As CLIA member cruise lines pursue net-zero emissions by 2050, AI can help optimize and manage fuel consumption, which decreases emissions as well as operational costs. It can also assist in anticipating maintenance needs, allowing ships to continue to run at optimal efficiency and in accordance with environmental rules and regulations.

In addition, AI can help more accurately predict (and minimize) food waste right down to predicting which dishes and drinks will be most popular, leading to more efficient provisioning. Crew have been doing this manually, by hand or through laborious data entry for years, but AI can do these calculations on the fly – which frees up crew to focus on other aspects of the ship, and guests.

AI is also playing a role in crew training and security, with AI-simulated safety drills for a range of scenarios.

Human touch required

One area that AI won't be found on your next cruise: The crew.

Though AI may assist crew in their day-to-day duties, AI cannot replace the kind of service and technical know-how that deck, engine, and hotel officers can provide. AI can, for instance, tell the officer of the watch if there is oncoming weather, but cannot bring a vessel safely into port – which requires human expertise. And though AI may be able to aid your bar, dining, and cabin staff, it cannot replicate their duties – or friendly personalities.

Instead, AI looks to improve the cruise experience, making ships run more efficiently than ever before.

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