

Technology in Hotels



Serge Chamelian, managing director, H-Hotelier takes Hospitality News on a journey to discover the latest in hotel technology

Consumers are increasingly becoming very sophisticated regarding the use of technology in their professional and personal lives; more so, their expectations from hotels are growing remarkably. According to a survey – SmartBrief 2013 - the majority of respondents stated that technology offerings in hotels are an important factor when choosing a hotel. Thus, savvy hotels are increasing their tech spending to meet customer expectations, by adapting their guest rooms, banquet venues, restaurants and front desks to today's technology advances. This article offers an overview of technology currently operative and presents latest technology trends.

Technologies at the front desk/ concierge

B Hotels & Resorts are the first hotel company to have a custom-designed concierge service for each property that aims at providing their customers with a more comfortable and customizable travel experience. B Hotels & Resorts partnered with Monscierge, which provides instant access to information about everything from hotel amenities to weather forecasts to flight updates, local tips, and more. Monscierge updates automatically to provide real-time information to guests staying at the hotels - or remotely through their devices. This touchscreen concierge technology has the capability of providing complete interactive applications and all related content in twelve languages, making it attractive as the company grows, both nationally and globally. B Hotels & Resorts plans to roll out more features of the app that is set to showcase an interactive communication between team members and customers and allows the latter to order room service, call valet, request housekeeping services or extra pillows, and so on.

For other properties, a concierge service may be defined differently- they call it e-concierge- Hyatt's high-tech concierge

service is Twitter-based. In all Hyatt hotels, this service was introduced a couple of years ago, wherein it allows guests to send requests to HyattConcierge. Employees at Hyatt must respond to messages within fifteen minutes. Other chain hotels, such as Intercontinental hotels, are using iPads in hotel lobbies.

Check In Kiosk seems to be from the past although YOTEL has embraced innovation with their new hotel feature called YOBOT – the world's first robotic luggage concierge. For example, at the New York City property, the guest check-in process begins with an easy-to-operate, airline style check-in kiosk. The Worldline Self-Service kiosks from Atos are accessible 24/7 and check-in can be completed in three quick steps. After checking in, guests are immediately greeted by Mission Control, YOTEL New York's futuristic version of a traditional hotel concierge/front desk. This fully-equipped station is manned 24 hours, seven days a week, and is the gateway for future hotel bookings, Internet stations with free printing, getting tips on local services, events and neighborhood 'must-see-and-dos'. The revolutionary YOBOT – a towering robotic arm located in the hotel's lobby – takes guests' bags and stores them in bins. Using a touch screen, guests enter the number and size of their bags, and YOBOT brings a container to the drop off area. To collect luggage, a simple bar code ticket is scanned and YOBOT will retrieve the bags.

h-enigma – a product of h-hotelier which simplifies the concept of business intelligence – consists of an enhanced reporting tool with a yield and CRM module incorporated in it. h-enigma aims at assisting managers in their daily decisions to achieve growth and improve the business bottom line performance by providing them with a customized product/service. The extracted reports and recommendations extracted can be customised to the request of the client and even sent by email or as an alert to any mobile device.

In-Room Technologies

Customers are becoming very sophisticated; in a hotel, they want not only stylish design, great value, comfort, free entertainment, good location, but also friendly technology, which enables them to personalize their hotel stay exactly the way they want it. That extends from personalized check-in to lighting, temperature and curtain control, wireless internet access and a flat-screen

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entertainment center – all accessible through an intuitive controller. This affordable luxury caters for a new generation of travelers: the 'Citizen Mobile.'

Several hotels have joined forces to replace hotel room keys with NFC-enabled mobile phones. The technology makes it possible for hotel guests to check-in and out using their mobile phones. The first pilot has started already at the Clarion Hotel Stockholm in Sweden.

International lighting specialist Philips and carpet manufacturer Desso have teamed up to create a range of new light emitting carpets, designed to enhance information, direction and safety in hotels. The lighting de-clutters spaces by making important information visible only when needed, and also enhances ambience and atmosphere. This lighting solution, currently being piloted, has been designed for high traffic areas and will be available in a range of different colors, shapes and sizes.

LG Electronics USA helps hotel operators transform the in-room guest experience with the next generation of interactive TVs that interface seamlessly with guests' smartphones and tablets for a personalized big-screen viewing experience. Capitalizing on the emerging trend of leisure and business travelers viewing content on their own devices in hotel rooms, LP870H televisions are designed for "second screen" support and include technologies, which are used to pair guests' mobile devices. This enables guests to view their own content on the large LED screen – directly with the TV or via an imbedded application from a system integrator partner. The flagship of LG's hospitality TV line, the LP870H series is built around the enhanced Pro:Centric platform with support for Java, Flash and HTML software to deliver one of the widest ranges of partner interactive applications available in the hospitality market.

