

Hotel and restaurant technologies



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

Restaurant

The majority of the restaurant industry is struggling to figure out how to leverage innovative technologies to enhance their operations and to meet customer reliance on new technology – in every aspect of their lives. My first encounter and experience with restaurant technologies was at the **Burgerlich** restaurant in Dusseldorf, Germany. A table built-in tab device with an interactive menu allowed me to make my order and pay for it without being in contact with a server. Several successful technologies are currently available on the market for the restaurant industry to embrace; I share, below, the most exciting trends:

Pizza Hut is in the concept phase of testing an interactive table, created in partnership with Chaotic Moon Studios, which allows guests to visualize their pizza as they construct it right on the tabletop touchscreen as they order it. Guests will be able to select crust, sauce, cheese, and then add toppings. While waiting for a pizza at the interactive tables, customers can play several games accessible from a screen that pops up after an order is placed. Other plans for the tabletop



screens include tying the technology to guests' smartphones. Guests will be able to have a Pizza Hut account on their phones so they will be able to save previous orders, as well as pay through devices such as 'mobile wallets'. For instance, **Chili's** now offers guests **tabletop tablets** to order, pay their bill and play video games, which so far, have been very well-received by guests at its nationwide test locations. After a five-month test of various tabletop devices in 28 Chili's restaurants, sales increased as much as 20 percent.

Buffalo Wild Wings is also continuing to roll out guest-interfacing tablets at all of its North America locations, featuring Buzztime's BEOND social, mobile and entertainment platform. Using the tablets, guests can order food, request songs or watch TV programs, play games, and pay their bill. The tablets could further mitigate labor costs, by enabling fewer servers to cover more tables, while simultaneously enhancing customer experience.

Flying Drones used for delivery! Amazon plans to deliver its packages within 30 minutes by using drones by 2015, via its Amazon Prime Air. But it is not the only company engaging the idea of using an aerial vehicle for commercial purposes. In fact, **Domino's** pizzas, **Yo Sushi** and **Yo Burger** in London, the United Kingdom and **Francesco's Pizzeria** in Mumbai, India posted earlier this year that drones delivered treats to customers' doorsteps. The drone is equipped with cameras, a tray to carry packages or food, and will be controlled by a human/employee with an iPad. However, several challenges need to be addressed: weather, safety, and battery life, along with approval and regulations on usage of drones from agencies such as Federal Aviation Administration or the American Federal Aviation Authority.

The restaurant industry has started successfully adopting **Google Glass** by enhancing its operations. Indeed, **KFC**, part of **Yum!** Brands has tested Google Glass for

training purposes. KFC and **Interapt**, a mobile and wearable technology strategy firm, started working on a prototype Google Glass training program, Vision 2020, in November 2013. The companies filmed training tasks at KFC, using Google Glass, then developed software and a Google Glass video used to train new KFC employees in a limited test. The advantages of this innovative learning method include immediate recall of key tasks, potentially real-time support for managers, and a great way to drive more efficiency, consistency, and faster time performance.

Menu-labeling regulations (to be released soon) will require US restaurants to print calories on menus and provide nutrition information such as fat, sodium, and protein among others. The advantages lie in monitoring a nation's health by allowing customers to make informed choices about the appropriate foods for their diet, and preventing and controlling obesity, heart disease, cancer, diabetes and other nutrition-related conditions. The future will allow customers to self-track their daily calorie intake, in order to make sound choices in their food selection at restaurants. Nike grasped this futuristic idea and is currently undergoing research to enhance its current **FuelBand** (activity tracker which allows its wearers to track their physical activity) to synchronize with the restaurant's menu to suggest the best dietary food items, so customers can fulfill their calorie consumption for the day.



Hotel

Today, technology offerings in hotels are an important factor when guests choose a hotel

Monscierge

Guests want travel information to be easily accessible; they want great local recommendations and they want to connect to their hotel to have a great experience. Monscierge has worked with hotels and brands around the world to create our Connect Suite, a complete solution to engage guests throughout their entire journey. Clients like Diamond Resort International, Novotel, Holiday Inn, Crown Plaza, Radisson Blu among many others have already adopted the application. monsicerge.com



h-hotelier

H-enigma a product by h-hotelier is a web-based, multi-property, multi-currency, multi-pms, multi-lingual, fully automated reporting tool. Collects data seamlessly from your PMS, including but not limited to, budget, events, reservations, and performance figures. It is SMS enabled: Ability to automatically send the hotels performance figures by SMS text messaging to selected groups of users. The forecasting and pricing module enables the client to attract multiple revenue managers on a local or regional level. h-hotelier.com

GoBoard 4.0

A virtual concierge provides a directory of restaurants, entertainment, and other points of interest. It is easy to access and intuitively organized. The content can be personalized to the local area and for hotel guests in a way that's superior to common Web-enabled devices. GoBoard serves the needs of guests and the constantly changing technological requirements of business and personal travelers worldwide. The new 4.0 version highlights mobile integration, enhancing the user experience with features such as Microsoft Tags.



hibox housekeeper

Hinox housekeeper is designed to reduce costs and improve efficiency when it comes to cleaning. It started at hotels in the Nordic region and has recently become available worldwide. The app allows staff members to report a room status, send problem reports with photos, track minibar usage, manage multiple cleaning sessions, and link directly to the property management system in the hotel. All this, in theory, adds up to a more organized approach that should lead to quicker turnaround times.

hibox.tv/Hotel-HousekeepingSystem.shtml



Ice Guestroom tablets

Ice Guestroom tablets give guests the ability to order in-room dining, make housekeeping requests, schedule wake-up calls – in fact, guests may request all 35 hotel services with the touch of a finger. Guests can plan and pre-plan their services in their own time and at their own pace without waiting on hold or in line. Intelity's revolutionary technology connects hotel staff and hotel guests like never before, resulting in greater revenue opportunities, streamlined efficiencies and a better overall guest experience.

intelitycorp.com

St Regis New York's E-Butler program

This program is actually a mobile app that is available from the iTunes app store for free. Guests can download it prior to arriving at the hotel and then once they arrive, they can start communicating electronically with their butler. See an example of a butler-guest chat above. The client can interact directly in real time with the concierge and butler.



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