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In-room entertainment: Much more than fun and games

Microsoft technology gives guests the entertainment they've come to expect

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Guests have always craved the comfort of home when they check into a hotel. Now, a growing number of business and leisure travelers want all the comforts of the digital living room when they hit the road, including video-on-demand, video games, digital music, and high-speed Internet.

"Many people have become acclimated to starting, stopping, backspacing, and fast-forwarding through a program while it is airing," writes Russell Shaw on [Hotel & Motel Management.com](#). "It's only natural that guests would want that same functionality in their hotel rooms."

In "[There's an Xbox on your pillow](#)," reporter Peter Sander of the *Wall Street Journal* points out that a growing number of hotels are differentiating themselves from the competition through in-room technology. "It's part of a broader movement as hotels look for new ways to appeal to tech-savvy guests who expect increasingly sophisticated in-room entertainment."

Microsoft is a long-time leader in digital entertainment. Along with developing leading-edge technology such as the Xbox and Windows XP Media Center, Microsoft is working with a number of in-room solution providers. Together with our partners, we have developed in-room systems that help hoteliers meet the needs of tech-savvy guests.

Installing in-room entertainment doesn't have to be complicated Hoteliers are faced with many decisions when it comes to offering video-on-demand to their guests.

- **Is it cost-effective to install high-definition (HD) television sets in each room?** Guests will value the high-quality equipment, but the return on investment for these sets is long.
- **Does it make sense to rewire a property with fiber-optic lines?** According to Shaw, "Fiber-optic lines to the television set can carry more bandwidth—and more services—at faster rates than coaxial cable. But retrofits can be costly and disruptive to guests."

Microsoft recognizes the needs of both hotel guests and hoteliers. That's why we are partnering with leading hospitality industry solution providers to create solutions based on Microsoft Windows Server 2003 and Windows Server System infrastructure technologies. Because many hoteliers already use the Microsoft platform for their complex property management, point-of-sale, and customer relationship management systems, implementing these solutions is simple and cost-effective. Using partner solutions based on the Microsoft platform, video-on-demand can be offered with minimal disruption to guests and at minimal cost to hoteliers.

Related Links

- [Microsoft in-room entertainment system solutions](#)
- [Microsoft solutions for the hospitality industry](#)
- [KoolConnect Web site](#)

Partner applications focus on guests' needs

Microsoft and our partners help hoteliers address the challenge of providing home entertainment options on a large scale. One of those partners, KoolConnect Technologies, offers two levels of in-room entertainment solutions: Imagine and Intrigue. These solutions use the Microsoft platform to supply video-on-demand, high-speed Internet access, virtual concierge services, and more.

With Microsoft and KoolConnect partnering on the technology to meet guests' needs, Comcast has stepped in to provide premium video-on-demand content. This includes free-to-guest HD channel broadcasts and HD first-run movies. "Content is king," says Michael DiLeva, executive vice president and general manager of KoolConnect. "Because Comcast is allowing us to use their content, we're able to offer hotel guests a diverse and extensive viewing library through the convenience of their in-room television sets."

Using the Microsoft .NET Framework, KoolConnect's solutions provide dynamic in-room content tailored to each guest's preferences. Return guests are greeted with favorite room service menu items or available spa appointments on their in-room television sets, based on data tracked during previous stays. New guests can use their in-room sets to view an introduction to the property and its amenities, or to become familiar with the nearby area.

All of the in-room services provided using KoolConnect's Imagine and Intrigue solutions are controlled through a Web-based management system, KoolCentral. Authorized personnel can use KoolCentral to update content and enhance marketing programs, as well as troubleshoot engineering issues on the property. DiLeva explains: "When a guest has an issue with an in-room system and contacts the front desk, the employee responding to the call has the benefit of using a single management console to resolve the issue. This dramatically reduces complexity for IT managers, who today are often dealing with as many as 80 different systems."

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In-room entertainment solutions are smart investments

By providing guests with in-room entertainment solutions, hoteliers are not only satisfying their guests' needs and simplifying the management process for their staff. They are also making smart investments that help increase revenue and reduce costs.

In-room entertainment solutions help:

- **Increase return-guest revenue.** In-room solutions provide more points of contact with guests, thereby providing more opportunities to encourage repeat business. Custom preferred-guest promotions can be advertised and booked from the comfort of a guest's hotel room.
- **Provide additional revenue prospects.** Other sources of revenue, such as local ad placement, promotion opportunities, and online retail sales, are possible using in-room solutions.
- **Reduce staffing costs.** With room management self-service options offered through in-room solutions, guests can review room charges, check themselves out, complete online surveys, and fill out suggestion forms using their television sets.

"KoolConnect's in-room entertainment solutions are more than a way for hoteliers to provide an amenity for their guests," says DiLeva. "They provide a complete solution to a hotelier's fragmented supply-and-demand systems, while offering opportunities for additional revenue and cost savings. Simply put, in-room solutions are smarter hospitality."

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