

THE FUTURE OF IN ROOM ENTERTAINMENT HAS ARRIVED



GET INSPIRED
IT'S ONLY AVAILABLE AT



KoolConnect

HIGH DEFINITION TV ■ HIGH SPEED INTERNET ACCESS ■ VIDEO ON DEMAND
DIGITAL MEDIA GALLERY ■ MAJOR MOTION PICTURE FILMS ■ SATELLITE TV CHANNELS

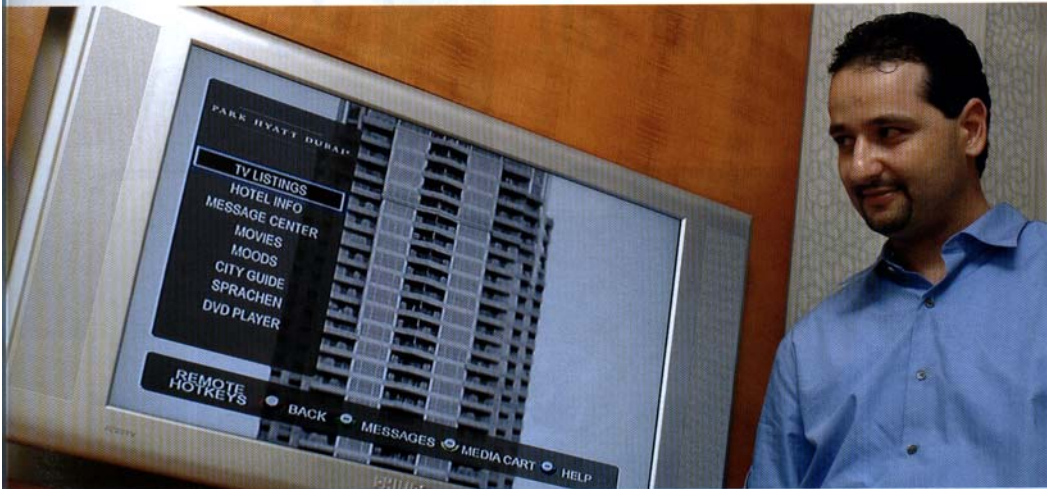
NOW SERVING THE MIDDLE EAST VIA OUR LOCAL PARTNER

CATVISION
Making Technology Work For You

WWW.KOOLCONNECT.COM

1-877-4-KOOLTV

Integrated rooms



From mirror televisions to integrated systems for TV, music, lights and air conditioning, in-room technology is advancing at a rapid pace

There was a time when just having a television in your hotel room was considered the ultimate in luxury. Nowadays, that television has turned into an integrated entertainment platform that provides video on demand, internet access, hotel information, and links to local attractions.

Customisation is key. All hoteliers know guests want all the comforts of home, and the latest technological advances can see guests arriving to a room showing their favourite news channel, website, soap opera, or playing their favourite song.

Philips, working closely with system integrators, has developed a wide range of flatscreen TV monitors to complement the new generation of in-room entertainment. In recent years, plasma and LCD TVs have become the most desirable of consumer products. The luxury end of the hotel industry has also been installing large flatscreen TVs at a furious rate to meet the expectations of guests. Philips offers LCD products ranging from 15" to 52", and a 42" plasma model. The range is interactive and has been designed specifically for the hotel market. But there is more to come.

"Philips ITV [institutional TV] has been focusing on renewing its comprehensive hotel range from normal CTV, to sophisticated LCD and plasma screens, to the mirror TVs," explains Khalid Iguer, regional general manager, consumer electronics, Philips Middle East.

"The new [mirror] range will enter the market in the last quarter this year and will have a range of sophisticated and interactive features that will keep it simple for the consumer and reap cost and operational benefits for the hotel operator.

"From a consumer point of view, we have come out with the latest designs in terms of form and style factor. The latest edition of our mirror TV will also combine style with functionality and practicality. The hotel operators will benefit from low operating costs, ease of operation and installation, and maintenance," he adds.

Siemens has also been developing its technological hardware. The company provides the complete gamut of in-room gadgets, ranging from telephones, LAN access, laptops and PDAs, interactive television systems and video on demand, to 'behind the scenes' technology, such as access control, air conditioning, and energy saving lighting systems.

"Our most popular systems are the HiPath Hospitality Service Centre, an intelligent CRM application, and the room management solution," explains Axel Wetter, regional manager, Siemens Hospitality.

"In anticipating the demand for intelligent CRM solutions, Siemens developed a completely new software application — the HiPath Hospitality Service Centre. The goal was to create a client/server application that optimises telephony at the hotel workstation while also making use of excellent

integration capabilities to leverage the benefits of central data resources. The HiPath Hospitality Service Centre integrates a guest call centre with an intelligent service tracking module and a powerful data mining system that allows for productivity control, staff resource planning and management scorecards," he explains.

In control

Integrated systems are catching on, as hotels look to make in-room technology more user-friendly and integrated.

Bang & Olufsen has been marketing its Beo4 integrated system to the retail market for some years, and is now edging its way into the hospitality sector. The Danish company has already supplied the royal suites at the Shangri-La Hotel Dubai, and it has recently opened an office in Dubai to better facilitate its regional expansion.

The Beo4 system provides one remote control to operate televisions, DVD, stereo, lights and overhead projectors.

"Beo4 has been customised to make it easy for first time users to access TV in the rooms, as well as the hotel's own interactive systems," says Lars Klíxbull, international key account manager, Bang & Olufsen.

"The Bang & Olufsen BeoLink system distributes sound and picture specifically to those areas where it is required, without filling up the entire

hotel with audio or video equipment. Every room has individual control of the main source, which means there can be quiet background music in one room at the same time you are playing louder music in other rooms — even from the same music source,” Klixbull adds.

Dubai-based Bond Communications offers a fully integrated suite of systems that manages all aspects of hotel operations, including front office, restaurants and accounting. In-room, Bond offers SMATV, interactive television, plug-play internet and in-room automation.

“The most recent achievement by Bond was the implementation of a very comprehensive in-room smart touch panel system at Emirates Palace Hotel, Abu Dhabi. Each room is equipped with an easy-to-use smart touch panel operating over the hotel’s wireless infrastructure to control all in-room facilities, including TV, audio/video systems, lighting, and A/C. This is the first installation of its kind in this part of the world,” boasts Nicholas Mobayed, president and CEO, Bond Communications.

While the Emirates Palace system was a first of its kind, most hotels are content with less integration. As such, plug-play high-speed internet access and interactive television are Bond’s two most popular in-room technology products.

Who buys what?

According to Eran Sherin, president of US-based KoolConnect, there are two types of buyers.

“First, there are the consultants and builders, who select the product on price,” Sherin explains. “They have no real awareness of what the hotel management can leverage on this product.

“Second, there is the management group itself. These are more educated on how to leverage the interactive television (ITV) systems. They leverage to create brand, market service and personalise the guest experience. That’s the key to this system,” he maintains.

The KoolConnect system can have the same look and feel as the hotel. The company, in association with regional distributor, CatVision, installed the ITV system at the recently opened Park Hyatt Dubai. The system’s graphics use photography and artwork that was specially commissioned for the property, adding a customised feel to the product and helping the television blend in with its surroundings.

“For this hotel, it was more about moods, and the hotel utilises this investment to create ambience and as a digital art form,” Sherin says.

“We create a totally customised system. For instance, for groups staying in hotels, the hotel can programme a group code, so that the room experience in those rooms is different. They can programme logos on the screen, show the event schedule, and send group messages, as well as notifying the organiser as to how many messages have been read,” Sherin explains.

Internet connectivity

Of course, not all in-room technology is related to entertainment. Internet access is also fast becoming a must have for five-star properties, as hotels boast WiFi, high speed, and broadband connectivity. Singapore’s inter-touch specialises in ‘visitor based networks’. The company recently installed high-speed wireless internet access at the Al Sondos Suites by Le Meridien in Dubai.

“Our most recent in-room technologies provide

a superior user experience with robust port security and seamless plug-and-play capability,” says John Houston, CEO and president of inter-touch.

MORE ENHANCED SERVICES OVER THE COMMON INTERNET PROTOCOL WILL EMERGE TO PROVIDE USERS WITH ENRICHED CONTENT AND ENTERTAINMENT OVER SINGLE NETWORK ARCHITECTURE

“inter-touch understands the importance of providing easy and quick access to the internet to the business traveller. Through enhanced port redirection in our latest visitor-based network, users are able to enjoy seamless internet connectivity without having to reconfigure or lose their existing computer settings. Our technology automatically detects and appropriately redirects data packets sent from non-standard or customised ports set up in the users’ computers to their destinations in the internet,” Houston explains.

This plug and play capability has also allowed inter-touch to achieve a 99% first time connection rate across its installed base

The inter-touch service provides a roaming internet access system whereby users connected to the inter-touch visitor-based network can access broadband internet connectivity in their hotel rooms as well as in other public areas of the hotel. They can also use either a wired port or wireless access point, and prepay or be billed direct to the room.

inter-touch’s prepaid broadband internet access scratch cards system is supported by a global real-time Radius server architecture, which performs all authentication, accounting and access across its installed base. “The robustness of our global Radius architecture ensures that wherever a prepaid card user connects to the inter-touch installed base, authentication and access will be granted in real-time and time used is accurately tracked for each prepaid card account,” Houston explains.

Future trends

With interactive television becoming a standard in-room commodity, what will be the next technological innovation to hit the guest room?

“As technology convergence continues to take place, more enhanced services over the common Internet Protocol will emerge to provide users with enriched content and entertainment over single network architecture. An example would be the delivery of IP-based digital TV to the hotel guest, where they will have access to the same TV channels available at home through their personal notebook computer,” Houston predicts.

Meanwhile, Band & Olufsen’s Klaxbull believes size is the next ‘growth’ area, with bigger definitely being better. “[I see] larger screen sizes, and greater investment in complete entertainment solutions, such as BeoLiving, which is Bang & Olufsen’s complete package offering integration between home cinema on a plasma screen and/or a drop-down projection screen with projector, audio sources, lighting and curtains, all controlled by the Beo4 remote control,” he predicts.

The Magic Wand - A bombshell in the kitchen



Tomaco is proud to announce being appointed as the sole distributor and stockist of **BAMIX of Switzerland** in the GCC Countries. **BAMIX Gastro** is a high quality, professional hand held food processor designed and produced for modern commercial kitchens.

The world renowned **Bamix** sought after by every professional Chef strains and blends in quantities up to 20 liters - liquidizes and homogenizes soups - stirs - creams, pancake and omelet mixtures - chops, purees and liquidizes vegetables - and fruit - makes mayonnaise in seconds - whips cream and egg-white - even crushes ice cubes and frozen fruit ... and it is cleaned in seconds !!! Besides the easy cleaning, the greatest advantage of the **Gastro** is the fact that you can work directly in any container or even in the pot on the stove - no need to pour food from one container into another.

We now have in stock **Bamix** products. Please visit our showroom on Sheikh Zayed Road where you can view **Bamix** products or contact our corresponding sales person for more details.

Agent for UAE, Oman & Qatar

TOMACO
(LLC)

Tel: +971 4 3400191

Fax: +971 4 3400106

Email: tomaco@eim.ae