

GUEST ROOM TECHNOLOGY

WHAT GUESTS WANT!



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Today we continue our discussion about Guest Room technology and the global trends and how they impact what, we as hoteliers, need to provide our guests. Last time we looked at Ubiquity; the fact that many people have internet access and it is almost viewed as a utility, Mobility; internet access from the palm of your hand and Cloud Computing; access to business and personal data and productivity tools that are available via the internet. Today we will look at Social Media and iVideo and iTV.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Social Media, it's here whether we like it or not. Facebook has 901 million active users. If Facebook was a country, it would be the third largest country in the world. There were 2.7 billion likes on Facebook every day. It is the second most visited website after Google.

This is an interesting diagram. It shows how long it took each of these technologies take to reach 50 million users.

It took the radio, 38 years, the television 13 years, the Internet 4 years and the iPod, 3 years to reach 50 million users. Whilst in less than a year, Facebook reached 200 million users. I think this helps to put a new perspective on things.

There are a couple of other social media portals worth mentioning. LinkedIn is one, with 150 million members, two members joining every second. 80% of companies now are using social media for their recruitment and of that 95% of them are using LinkedIn.

The other one we should mention is Twitter. There are 500 million active users and million accounts added daily. That's 1 every 11 seconds.

Then there is YouTube which is the third most visited website on the web. It has 2 billion views per day. That is 23,000 every second. YouTube now counts for 10% of internet traffic. There are 829,000 videos uploaded every day and that is about 100,000 videos uploaded every 4 minutes.

Pinterest is another relatively new social media site. It was launched in March 2010. It's really about pinning images and videos that you like, to an online Pin board. The key thing about Pinterest; is it has grown faster than Google and Facebook ever did. It has been the fastest site to reach the 10 million unique visitor mark. And, in January 2012, it was driving more referral traffic to retailers than LinkedIn, YouTube and Google Plus.

And of course we can't forget TripAdvisor which we are all familiar with in the hotel industry. It is the largest travel website. There are 50 million unique visitors each month. 61% of people are now researching travel online and one in four people check TripAdvisor before actually booking. This is why a number of the chains are now putting TripAdvisor information on their website so potential guests don't need to go off the TripAdvisor. They can actually get the information right there, because if they go away from the site, chances are, they might not come back.

TripAdvisor has seen a strong mobile uptake since late 2011. Obviously, good things can be said about your property on TripAdvisor but on the flip side a poor technology experience could result in a bad review on the TripAdvisor.

So, in summary social media, is a different way for people to interact. It's a different way for companies to portray themselves and interact with their clients. It is very much in-the-moment technology and access from mobile devices is becoming extremely popular.

More than half of the Facebook users these days access Facebook from a mobile device. So, if you weren't paying attention before,

that means that more than 450 million people are accessing Facebook on a mobile device daily.

SO, WHAT IS THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON HOTELS?

Well, many guests will want to connect to social media when they are at your property. They may, well, update TripAdvisor so you need to make sure they have something good to say. But once again, we see an increased demand for internet access. Social media increases the frequency of the use of internet for your guests. It also increases the number of locations where the guest may wish to connect. Years ago, we would simply have wireless internet access in the lobby, then guests wanted it in their rooms. Now, they want and expect it everywhere; function areas, pool, restaurants, you name it.

VIDEO AND ITV

The fifth and final trend is iVideo and iTV. Basically people's viewing habits have changed. People no longer sit down at a particular time to watch a program that they want. Instead they want to watch, what they want, when they want. So, the TV networks are



providing access to programs via the internet; iView from the ABC, Channel 10, Channel 7. They all have a website where you can go and watch a previous episode via the web. There are also movie subscription websites such as Bigpond movies which let you download Movies straight to your PC or T-Box. In 2011, online subscriptions for Netflix, which is a US based movie site, hit 23.6 million subscribers in the US plus another 26 million worldwide.

Further to that, over recent months, BBC iPlayer which is equivalent to our

ABC's iView has seen a particularly significant growth in requests from tablets and internet connected TV's. They are now making up 40% of viewing devices.

WHAT'S THE IMPACT ON HOTELS?

Guests want to catch up on their favourite TV program from their room. So, as we've said before, there's less dependence on in-house movies. There's an increased need for internet access because they are streaming something over the internet. Because it's streaming, there's going to be an increased demand for bandwidth. There will also be an increased demand for things like connectivity panels which will allow guests to connect their laptop or their tablet up to the TV so they can watch their content on the TV which these days will be a 40 or a 42 inch TV.

We've talked about less dependence on in-house movies before. Many of you have probably seen a drop in video on demand revenue. Here are some statistics that the Mandarin Oriental Group put out probably just on 2 years ago now. They said that 30 to 35% of the guests were connecting to the internet whereas only 4 to 6% were using video-on-demand. Given that the numbers are two years old (pre-iPad) internet connectivity is probably even higher and video-on-demand has decreased further.

IN SUMMARY – WHAT IS THE IMPACT OF THESE TRENDS ON HOTEL GUEST ROOMS?

High speed internet access is expected from rooms and public spaces. There's an increasing demand for more bandwidth and it's only escalating. The demand for wireless networks is escalating and also there's a need for greater signal strength for wireless as we see more smart phones and tablets being connected to hotel networks.

Guests want to enjoy their own content from the comfort of their room so there's an increased demand for connectivity to the TV as well. They're demanding to connect multiple devices to the internet and the fact that they bring in multiple devices means there's an increased demand for power outlets.

For further information please contact [Technology 4 Hotels](http://Technology4Hotels.com.au)

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