

The future of hotel room design

When we think about the hotel of the future, you might think interactive mirrors, robot room service and voice-controlled lighting. But near-future changes might be less dramatic. By understanding how people live their lives today, hotels can improve the guest experience in small but significant ways.



1 EMBRACING MOBILE

The days of ringing for room service are numbered. So-called 'concierge' smartphone apps now do more than provide basic hotel information. The Hilton Honors app^[1], for example, enables guests to book a stay, choose their preferred room, digitally check in and check out, even use their phone as a digital door key. They can also use the app to message the hotel to order anything they need, without ever calling the front desk.

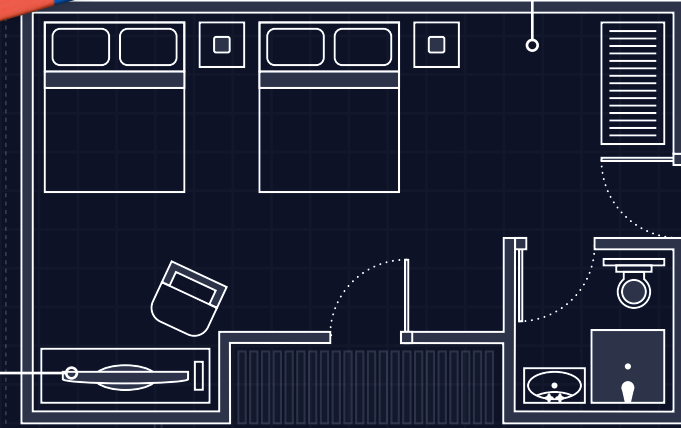
2 PERSONALISED ENTERTAINMENT

In-room entertainment can often feel like an afterthought in hotels. But the future of guest room TV could be increasingly personal. Marriott Bonvoy^[2], for example, already offers guests access to popular internet services including Netflix, YouTube, Pandora and Crackle across over 1,440 of its hotels. Simply sign in to your own account, watch/listen to your favorite content, and when you check out your login information is automatically deleted.

[1] <https://hiltonhonors3.hilton.com/rs/hilton-honors-mobile-app/>

[2] <https://www.marriott.co.uk/travel-deals/internet-tv.mi>

[3] <https://www.yotel.com/media/5745/9122019-designed-by-travellers.pdf>



3 EASY CHARGING

Hotel rooms rarely have enough power outlets for guests and those they have are either used by something else, like a lamp, or inconveniently placed (e.g. nowhere near the bed). Knowing that guests want to keep their phones and other devices charged, hotels are increasingly adding integrated power solutions to their rooms, adding extra power outlets, dedicated USB and USB-C charging ports, even wireless charging functionality.

5 ENHANCED CLEANLINESS

Cleanliness has been firmly front of mind during the Covid-19 pandemic and this could see hotel rooms looking quite different in the future. For example, we might see upholstery and carpeting disappear, replaced by smooth surfaces that are easier to clean. Hotels could follow Marriott's lead and introduce electrostatic spraying, which uses hospital-grade disinfectant to sanitize rooms.

6 MAKING RESPONSIBLE CHOICES

Again, while robot room service and voice-controlled lighting would be 'nice to have', near-future changes to hotel rooms will undoubtedly be much smaller. Corporate social responsibility has a key role to play here, so think sustainable furnishings and lower energy consumption, reduced waste, locally-sourced supplies, plus essential equipment upgrades that prioritize durability, safety and ease-of-use without compromising on design. That's the Brandstand way...

7 DIGITAL DOOR KEYS

According to a survey by hotel group YOTEL^[3], 88% of respondents "would ditch traditional room keys in favour of facial recognition for room access." In fact, the tech is here today. At the FlyZoo Hotel in the Chinese city of Hangzhou, guests can choose facial recognition to interact with the hotel, enabling them to be recognized by hotel systems and to unlock their room without needing a traditional keycard.



4 LOOK MA, NO WIRES!

Hotels are keen to reduce clutter, removing non-essential items like extra pillows and trays, while tucking away unsightly wires. Wireless room connectivity is a key part of this new guest room minimalism. In the future, we'll be able to order room service via an app, control lights with our voices, take advantage of fast Wi-Fi connectivity, and even charge our phones using Qi Wireless technology.