

Technology @ Home: Can it be Fun *and* Functional?
Smart Ways to Add Digital Devices to Your Humble Abode

North Olmsted, Ohio... You have your PDA. Your GPS. And the all-important apps on your iPhone. Digital technology is not only a part of our daily lives; but these devices really help to solve everyday problems faster *and* easier. But at the end of the day... when it's time to unwind at home, are *all* digital devices actually functional – or are some of them just fun?

“While it's true that the first generation of tech-savvy products for the home were very game-like in their functionality, manufacturers have learned that in order for a product to succeed in the digital marketplace, it has to offer a lot more than just a fun interface,” said Jack Suvak, director of market research and insights, Moen. “Many products today offer functionality *and* fun – and turning technology on at home doesn't mean your house is going to resemble a scene from ‘The Jetsons’... with robotic appliances and cold, difficult-to-use products. Today's tech-savvy products can be user-friendly and blend seamlessly into your décor.”

And, most of these products are found in the three rooms you use most – the kitchen, master bathroom and bedroom.

Counter Intelligence

The kitchen was one of the first rooms to incorporate technology, so many homeowners are comfortable with adding digital devices to this hub of the home. Plus, we've all seen how technology really can “work” in the kitchen – and is more than just a frivolous addition to the room. From microwaves that can sense the weight of food and adjust cooking times accordingly... to dishwashers which can sanitize dishes and glassware instantly... these tech-savvy additions have become a mainstay in many American homes.

Not surprising, research by Moen found that the kitchen was rated as the most important room to add technology (at 20 percent), followed by the master bedroom (16 percent) and master bathroom (15 percent).

One of the most unique digital devices to enter the kitchen scene recently is the Verizon Hub. This innovative home communications system allows families to stay current and connected by managing their communications, contacts and calendars, all from one easy screen on the

kitchen countertop. Perfect for the busy family, the Verizon Hub allows users to do everything from check local traffic and weather before leaving the house, update your calendar and automatically receive a text when an appointment changes, find the number of a new restaurant or get directions to a new site when soccer practice is moved. Families on- the- go can also access the functionality of the Verizon Hub remotely from a companion web site and the home-based Hub will be instantly updated.

And for those who actually still cook in the kitchen... there are a number of smart, tech-savvy appliances for the chef in all of us. Sharp's SuperSteam Oven has a sensor that measures the moisture in food, so it knows when to stop popping popcorn, defrosting chicken or reheating lasagna. Plus, you'll never have another piece of burned toast with the Breville Smart Toaster. This innovative machine comes with a chip that detects bread temperature, so it knows to cook frozen slices or thick bagels just a little longer.

Beeping in the Bath

After the kitchen, the master bathroom was one of the next-highest-rated rooms in which homeowners desired technology – primarily because many experience problems in the bath where a touch of technology could provide extra assistance. According to Moen research, 42 percent of those surveyed experienced one of the following problems in the bath:

- Water temperature in the shower is difficult to set/control
- Water temperature in the bath tub is difficult to set/control
- Bath tub water gets cold too quickly

Fortunately, there's an innovative, tech-savvy product which provides a solution to all of these problems. The new ioDIGITAL™ easy-to-use interface from Moen gives consumers the ability to set and maintain water temperature and flow in their shower or bath with electronic precision.

“With ioDIGITAL, it's like having your own personal digital ‘butler’ – that will set your vertical spa with the perfect temperature and flow; turn on your shower from across the room or while still in bed; or even top off your bath with hot water,” said Mark Knurek, senior product manager, Moen. “And the best part is that you can do all of this as easily as if you were programming a car radio. It's that simple.”

The foundation of ioDIGITAL is its intelligent interface. Providing quick, visual feedback, LED indicators flash until the requested settings are achieved – no more guessing if your shower or

bath is ready. Plus, the Roman Tub application features a remote control with a Hot Top Off feature, which allows users to easily warm their bath by filling the tub at the lowest flow setting with the hottest water temperature.

Let's Get Digital in the Bedroom

And finally, if you think the only digital device made for your bedroom is the snooze button – think again. There are products that actually help make sure you get a restful night of sleep. With the Zeo Personal Sleep Coach, you slip on a headband when you go to bed, which transmits your sleep information wirelessly to the Zeo bedside display and alarm clock. In the morning, the bedside display tells how you slept (how many times you woke up, how long you were in deep sleep, etc.), and then you can visit a personalized web site to upload your sleep data. Once you start tracking the patterns, you can understand how your lifestyle affects your slumber time and get personal tips on how to get a night of better zzz's.

“Even in today's economic times, be it ever so humbled or price reduced, there's still no place like home,” said Robin Avni, senior director and lead home/garden strategist, Iconoculture, a leading consumer research and advisory firm. “And homeowners are still willing to invest in little luxuries – especially those with technology – as they enable us to stay connected with each other as well as the outside world.”

And while tech-savvy products may seem like a big bite for some to chew... imagine how we ever *manually* rolled down our car window – or actually used a *key* to open the door? What once seemed like unnecessary inventions are now modern conveniences we couldn't live without.

For more information about the ioDIGITAL system from Moen or research information, visit moen.com/ioDIGITAL or call 1-800-BUY-MOEN.

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