

# Hotels using technology to better serve guests' needs

By Roger Yu, Reno Gazette-Journal

For a night of clubbing in Manhattan on a recent weekend, Seunghee Thomson turned to the iPad in her room at the Mondrian SoHo to ask the hotel's concierge for a recommendation.

The concierge desk, which received her iPad message, soon called with a name and directions.

"While I was waiting, I was thinking maybe I should call back to see if they got my message, but they called me back right away," said the fashion stylist from McLean, Va. "It's the first time I've had that experience in a hotel."

Mondrian is one of several hotels – and airlines, too – that are distributing iPads and similar devices to customers in an effort to tap the buzz surrounding tablet computers.

The effort is the latest by the travel industry to digitize a range of services that once required picking up the phone.

Using third-party software developers, hotels are introducing apps to order food, browse hotel amenities and local attractions, request wake-up calls, schedule housekeeping, message other guests and arrange car service. The apps are available for iPhone, iPad, BlackBerry and phones and tablets using Android and other operating systems.

"It's a self-service vehicle," said David Adelson of Intelity, which developed Mondrian's app and has about 380 hotels using the software. "Most travelers are used to self-service solutions in their daily lives and would rather prefer it."

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