Hotel of the future

In order to meet the high expectations of guests, the role of technology in the hotel industry is increasing in importance. Apps, but Google Glass as well, are employed to maximally meet the demands of the guest. Japan saw the opening of the first hotel mainly run by robots.

For the Netherlands, is this only a thing of the distant future, or a development Dutch hotel managers will readily embrace? We list the technological developments the hotel industry should follow closely.

INFLUENCE
Remarkable is that mainly the middle-class hotels prove to be the biggest investors in technology. This is shown by the research results from the Hotel Lodging Technology survey, held by Hospitality Technology magazine. Where formerly technology only played a valuable and supportive role behind the scenes, it is now a tangible asset, influencing the general hotel experience of the guest.

DISTANT FUTURE
In the Japanese Henn-na hotel, robots perform the check-in, take your luggage to your room and tell you all about the hotspots of the city you are staying in. For the Dutch market this seems something of the distant future, but closer to home, in the Belgian Ghent Mariott Hotel, visitors are already greeted by the humanoid robot Mario. He (it) speaks nineteen languages and is provided with two cameras and software for facial recognition with which it can recognize clients for a period of six months. Mario can perform various tasks, like giving out key cards, but it can also keep an eye on

the younger guests who are playing in the hotel's 'Kidscorner'. The business guests can also count on his unconditional support. Mario is not short-circuited by, for instance, a Powerpoint presentation.

APPS
Apart from the appearance of robots in the hotel industry, this sector sees the introduction of some other digital trends. In various Dutch hotels the check-in can be done by means of an app, and during your stay an app can also be used to choose for upgrades. A more comfortable room, a welcoming cocktail, a better view, a visit to the wellness

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center or ordering a cab, it can all be done from the smartphone or tablet. Because of the apps, there is more interaction with the guest, which makes it possible to faster meeting his demands and solving any problems. It is all about creating the best hotel experience. In 2013 the hotel software Oaky was launched, a Dutch invention. With the Oaky app the guest is in direct contact with the hotel by sharing wishes, interests and experiences from his smartphone or tablet. In the pre-arrival part he indicates his interests, which museums he wishes to visit in the city and which sports have his interest. But there is also a section with which he can customize his stay: which beverages does

he want in his minibar? What should the room temperature be? This way, the guest's wishes can be met optimally. Afterwards, the guest passes judgment on the facilities. The hotel uses the feedback and input to make the stay-experience during a next stay an even better one.

GOOGLE GLASS
Google Glass is also making an advance in the hotel sector. Starwood Hotels & Resorts, for instance, has developed a reservation app especially for Google Glass. With this, Starwood is the first hotel brand worldwide with a dedicated Glass-app. Using this SPG-app (Starwood Preferred Guest) guests can check their account, as well as the more than 1,200 Starwood hotels worldwide. Also, reservations can be made directly in the app, that was built especially for Google Glass. Some time ago, OTA Destinia launched Hotel Near me, with which, on the Destinia website, all available hotel rooms in the vicinity of the Glass-wearer can be checked, filtered by price and booked immediately. The Glass also guides the wearer to the front door of the booked hotel.

LI-FI
For every guest, free Wi-Fi is essential, but expectations are high regarding the new technology that is the successor of Wi-Fi: Li-Fi. This technology distributes internet signals and datastreams super fast by means of infra-red light throughout the hotel and the rooms. Regarding the internet of things (IoT), smart coffeemakers will be able to remember the personal preferences of hotel guests. In his room, the guest will find Oculus Rift headsets for 3D virtual reality in-room entertainment. With this set, the guest is immersed in a virtual world. And if you have forgotten to pack your toothbrush or dress-shoes, you simply use the hotel's 3D-printer to make a new one. Meeting rooms will offer the possibility to project images on any type and shape of surface. Last year at NH Hotels, for instance, we witnessed a meeting in which holograms were used. Here, tables could also be seen that functioned as wireless chargers, simply by placing mobile devices on them. In short: the sky is the limit regarding the technological developments in the hotel sector. Are you ready for this?