IoT System in Hotel Industry: A Case of The Peninsula Hong Kong

Source: Pexels (2023)

Background

The Internet of Things (IoT) refers to a network of physical devices embedded with sensors, software, and other technologies for communicating and transferring data over the internet with other devices and systems (Oracle, n.d.). Over the years, hotels have been using IoT devices to enhance their service and provide personalized experience to their guests.

With the mission to provide a seamless experience interlinking all in-room functions, The Peninsula introduced the SOTI MobiControl system. The system allows guests to control all in-room facilities using tablets or panels provided. Moreover, guests can now move around freely and still enjoy their favourite shows through the in-room tablet instead of having to sit still in front of the TV (Lifestyle Asia, 2020).

On the other hand, the SOTI MobiControl also collects real-time data for personalizing amenities and services tailored to guest preferences while uploading and creating profiles for each guest (Hospitality Tech, 2017). This data provides valuable insights into guest demographics, interests, and spending power, which then facilitates targeted upselling to the guest's phone or display them on the in-room SOTI MobiControl.

Challenges

Although the ability to create demographic profile for each guest and make personalized service recommendations promotes convenience and customer loyalty, there are few concerns regarding the collection of guest information from the SOTI MobiControl device. The first one being the lack of consent before proceeding to monitor guests' activity on the tablet and building an interest profile for them. This significantly undermines the privacy of the guest. Furthermore, IoT devices are particularly vulnerable to cyber-attacks because most of them do not have encryption module by default. Credentials and other important information transmitted to and from the device can be easily intercepted if someone penetrates the network (Fortinet, n.d.).

Discussion Questions

1. How can hotels effectively communicate their data collection and usage policies to guests?

2. How can hotels protect guest information from potential cyber-attacks, given the vulnerabilities of IoT devices?

3. How may the use of IoT in hotels evolve in the future, and what new challenges might arise?

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Keywords

- Internet of Things (IoT)
- Smart technology
- Personalization
- Data collection
- Data privacy
- Cybersecurity risk