

Integrate to accommodate

With home multimedia technology reaching new levels of sophistication, hoteliers have to pull out all the stops if their in-room entertainment systems are to remain impressive. António Silva of **Nonius** tells Rod James how integrated, interactive IPTV platforms can fulfill customer requirements while also turning a healthy profit.

In the hospitality business, technological trends come and go at an alarming rate. Twenty years ago, telephone services were one of an hotelier's biggest sources of income. Then along came the mobile phone, and the financial benefit of that technology disappeared overnight. Flat screen televisions are no longer considered a luxury and as wireless internet becomes commonplace, so it has become increasingly difficult for hotels to charge customers for the privilege of using it. Management teams are having to come up with new ways of generating revenue through in-room services while staying abreast of customers' growing expectations. António Silva, CEO of Nonius, believes that his company's NiVo entertainment system can fulfil both these requirements.

NiVo is an in-room 'infotainment' platform, which combines all the features a guest might need in one integrated system. It offers TV and radio channels, video on demand, internet access, and a broad selection of games, all accessible through a remote control and wireless keyboard. In addition to this, the platform gives customers access to a range of information and complementary services, allowing hotel guests to book a tennis court, partake in a spot of shopping, check flight schedules and even chat with friends and family using built-in widgets. Mounted behind the TV set and completely fan-less, the NiVo is designed to be unobtrusive and, like all Nonius products, is constructed with energy efficiency in mind. NiVo is the latest step in the evolution of the company, which has advanced rapidly since its formation five years ago.

At the forefront

Founded by three partners with more than ten years of experience each at multinational technology firms, Nonius began by offering internet services to the Portuguese hospitality industry. After becoming the country's largest provider of internet access management, with revenues doubling each year, the company expanded to the rest of Europe, Africa and South America. It has been growing ever since, shifting its R&D focus to IT/TV platforms in 2007. Now, in the words of Silva, the company is "ready to be talked about."

"We have been able to win some hard-fought deals against some of the most important players in the market," he says. "We want to make noise. We want to challenge international technology integration companies to work with us."

The company does this by offering a unique value-added, integrated sales package. Nonius will sell a customer one of its NiVo demonstration units, which is much cheaper than the final product and so a minimal investment risk.



Nonius's state-of-the-art entertainment system.

"We then offer free training to that customer's sales and technical teams through a programme of online tutorials," Silva explains. "After between one and three months they will be certified to sell our products. At the end of this period, if they decide they don't want to work with Nonius, they just return the equipment and we send back the money. We want them to be genuinely convinced."

Over the medium term, Silva sees this type of integrated infotainment system moving to the forefront of in-room entertainment technology, with platforms allowing for an even greater degree of interactivity.

"The offering of complementary services through the TV in a very internet-like way will be very important," Silva says. "We provide many of these features already, but we will look to make our system even more comprehensive."

He also foresees the advent of technology that will enable hotel managers to gain greater understanding of customer tastes and adjust their in-room integrated packages accordingly.

"If people are buying the latest blockbusters, maybe hoteliers should invest in bringing in more," he suggests. "If clients are booking golf, a manager can increase his or her focus on that area."

With the strides Nonius has already made towards achieving these goals, Silva anticipates a bright future.

"After some of the deals we've won, our company can go to the market and say, 'we are here, we have a top IPTV solution, come and work with us.'" ■

Further information

Nonius
www.noniussoftware.com

