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Service 2.0 at the iPhone hotel



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Forget filling in room service forms or hanging do not disturb signs on the door - hotels in the US are communicating with guests using iPods and iPhones, a practice that could soon spread to Australia.

Guests at the Malibu Beach Inn and the Sky Hotel, both in California, can order food, drinks, wake-up calls, spa treatments, concierge services and transportation, all from a special application on their iPhone or iPod Touch.

If they don't have either of the devices at check-in, guests are provided with a 16GB iPod Touch that has the "Hotel Evolution" application already loaded.

The application also allows guests - after logging in with their room number and security code - to look up information on shopping, nightlife and local restaurants, as well as check their messages.

There is an option to request DO NOT DISTURB, room cleaning, or additional linens, towels and toiletries.

Hotel Evolution's developer, Runtriz, said the system was also being installed in several hotels in Las Vegas, Orange County, Miami and New Jersey, but further details have yet to be announced.

"We would love to expand outside of the states to luxury properties in Australia but as of yet are not in discussion with any properties there," a spokeswoman said.

Hotels reportedly pay Runtriz \$US10 per room for using the service but it is unclear whether this cost is passed on to guests.

This week Apple announced it was the third biggest mobile phone manufacturer in the world in terms of revenue, with the iPhone outselling BlackBerry handsets in the most recent quarter.

Its iPhone revenues of \$US4.6 billion for the quarter place it behind Nokia (\$US12.7 billion) and Samsung (\$US5.9 billion) but ahead of Sony Ericsson (\$US4.2 billion), LG (\$US3.4 billion), Motorola (\$US3.2 billion) and BlackBerry-maker RIM (\$US2.1 billion).

In Apple's earnings call chief executive Steve Jobs hailed the result as a "milestone" for the company.

"RIM is a company that makes good products, and it's surprising after only 15 months in the market we could outsell them in any quarters," he said.

"If this isn't stunning, I don't know what is."

This story was found at:

<http://www.smh.com.au/articles/2008/10/24/1224351506448.html>