

The Evolution of RFID

What It Means for Security, Guest Satisfaction and Hotel Reputation



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Since its introduction, radio frequency identification (RFID) technology has transformed the way hotels offer their amenities and manage operations.

Guest expectations have risen accordingly, as they have become more accustomed to higher standards in service. From tracking staff uniforms and inventory to serving as a convenient form of payment, few service areas have been left unchanged by the rise of RFID and its many unique advantages.

As property and guest safety continues to be a top priority for hoteliers, RFID technology has become an attractive option for hoteliers seeking security access solutions that are capable of safeguarding against the latest threats and vulnerabilities.¹ In fact, with older door lock solutions increasingly susceptible to a host of unauthorized access methods, RFID technology has become a virtual requirement in an industry where the inability to provide a safe environment constitutes a legal liability. Yet as hotel reputations hinge on their ability to balance safety with enhanced guest convenience, RFID's diverse functionality meets both requirements by maximizing guest satisfaction and revenues, while minimizing operational costs and risks.

¹ <http://www.hotelnewsme.com/news/security-in-the-spotlight-2/>



True Satisfaction Starts with Total Peace of Mind

The top priority for every hotel is maintaining a safe environment for both guests and staff members at all times. Over the years however, a seemingly endless cycle of news reports have surfaced, detailing how hotel security access platforms are no longer safe from unauthorized tampering efforts.² With the obvious legal ramifications of neglecting to quickly fix such a lapse in security could have on reputation and bookings, many properties have scrambled to bring their security access systems up-to-date.

In a study released by Advisen for example, 56 percent of hoteliers surveyed revealed that they had upgraded their door lock systems during the previous two years.³ With the same research demonstrating that, while a minority of properties have suffered from door lock hacking attempts, a sizeable 27 percent did report such incidents, making it a significant factor to consider. Yet while hospitality's demand for enhanced security access platforms has always been clear, the need to balance hotel security needs with budgets and guest service convenience often leaves hoteliers with little room to maneuver.

With the rise of RFID and contactless technology, global hospitality markets are finally being presented with an option that can address these concerns, while also tackling the latest threats to property safety. Long identified as a weakness of older security access solutions such as magstripe-based door locks, the issue of unauthorized key cloning is one such vulnerability that RFID platforms solve. Unlike magstripe technology, RFID keycards benefit from a vital layer of data encryption that is fully immune to skimming devices notorious for their role in stealing sensitive consumer information. This provides full protection against both outside threats and the possibility of unethical staff making unauthorized keycard duplicates.⁴



A fully effective security strategy relies on a hotelier's ability to monitor and control all aspects of property-wide access at all times. On this front, RFID delivers a level of functionality beyond previous technologies. A few of these security benefits include:

- Online RFID networks can track all room entry attempts in real time.
- Suspected break-ins and disputes can be instantly investigated by remotely accessing door lock audit trails.
- Lost or stolen RFID keycards can be remotely deactivated before an incident takes place, minimizing liability and risks to guest satisfaction.

² <http://www.itstactical.com/digicom/security/your-hotel-room-may-not-be-as-secure-as-you-think/>

³ https://cdn2.hubspot.net/hub/93106/file-1121380885-pdf/docs/whitepaper_hotel_security_2014.pdf

⁴ <http://www.toledoblade.com/business/2012/06/10/ATM-skimming-crimes-on-rise-as-criminals-refine-techniques.html>

Successful Hotels Are Built on Trust



For those working at any level in hospitality, success is built upon fostering enduring relationships with guests in order to maintain sustained growth and repeat bookings. In strengthening such bonds, the role of technology has been identified as a vital factor in promoting guest loyalty for a variety of reasons.⁵

Perhaps most obvious is a guest's expectation that hotel services provide as high a level of quality and reliability as possible. This rings especially true for a hotel's security abilities where, thanks to widespread news coverage, guests are often just as informed about the latest product flaws and fixes as hoteliers are themselves.⁶ With guest satisfaction resting on the initial ability to obtain full peace of mind within their surroundings, properties must take into account

that a failure to update vulnerable security equipment can readily be recognized by guests and interpreted as a severe lack of consideration on the part of the hotel. Such guests may voice their dissatisfaction by taking their business elsewhere, forging relationships with those hoteliers that adequately address their safety needs.

The same news outlets that reveal weakness in outdated security access solutions however, are also often responsible for providing consumers with insight on the latest technology and what they should come to expect in today's hospitality market.⁷ For hoteliers seeking to enhance a sense of loyalty with their guests, RFID can serve as a primary method of physically demonstrating a property's commitment of keeping up with shifts in industry threats and trends.

⁵ <https://www.tnooz.com/article/How-hotels-can-leverage-technology-to-win-trust-among-guests/>

⁶ http://www.hospitalityupgrade.com/_magazine/MagazineArticles/How-Secure-is-Your-Hotel.asp

⁷ https://usatoday30.usatoday.com/money/industries/travel/2008-02-04-room-locks_N.htm

When Enhanced Security Also Means Greater Convenience

In recent years, consumer-based markets have significantly altered their offerings to conform to a world where demands for instant satisfaction and personalization is now the norm. Hospitality is no exception to this trend. RFID security access solutions offer an advantage to properties wishing to maintain a competitive edge. As a solution with diverse capabilities, RFID platforms can:

- Remotely assign and reassign guestrooms or extend stays without requiring guests to visit the front desk.
- Use keycard kiosks to convert the check-in and check-out process into a fully automated service, eliminating front desk waiting lines and reducing the strain on labor resources.
- Prevent keycard demagnetization caused by proximity to electrical devices by using a microchip to store access data.
- Allow use of a single keycard to gain access to multiple areas such as a hotel's spa or pool, saving guests from the need to carry multiple keycards and reducing card production costs.

- Link to a hotel's PMS to serve as a form of payment that allows guests to leave wallets and credit cards safely behind in guestrooms, creating a stronger incentive for on-site purchases.

Using microchip tags that can be embedded in virtually any item, RFID also offers endless choices when it comes to how guests can interact with a security access platform.⁸ From cards to keychains, to stickers or wristbands, properties wanting to go provide enhanced convenience can do so by equipping guests with an RFID key option that best suits their needs. Hotels and resorts that are near theme parks can, for example, offer reusable wristbands that serve as a means of access to both locations, and are far less likely to get misplaced. With the flick of a wrist, guests equipped with RFID wristbands can again also make purchases in a way that is virtually effortless.



⁸ <http://www.todayswirelessworld.com/2013/07/be-our-guest-how-rfid-devices-will-revolutionize-the-hospitality-industry/>

Hoteliers Have Needs Too



Guest advantages aside, hotels themselves can also gain many benefits from the enhanced functionality that an RFID security access solution provides, including:

- RFID door locks enjoy longer product lifespans and require less maintenance due to not relying on moving parts to function.
- Maintenance teams can leverage RFID's online network to remotely check which door lock batteries need replacing, eliminating time consuming random checks.
- RFID access systems offer substantially more affordable keycard encoders when compared to alternative platforms.
- RFID components can be housed within the door itself, providing hoteliers with freedom to choose from an array of door lock styles that compliment, rather than detract from a hotel's unique design.
- Hoteliers committed to the latest design trends can also leverage RFID's design diversity by making use of sleek door panels that control the locking mechanism while also creating a more modern look with full background and logo customization.
- RFID door panels can also offer convenience-enhancing features such as a door bell and the ability for guests to post 'do not disturb' and 'make up room' notifications via an accompanying guestroom-facing panel.

Security That Evolves as Future Needs Change

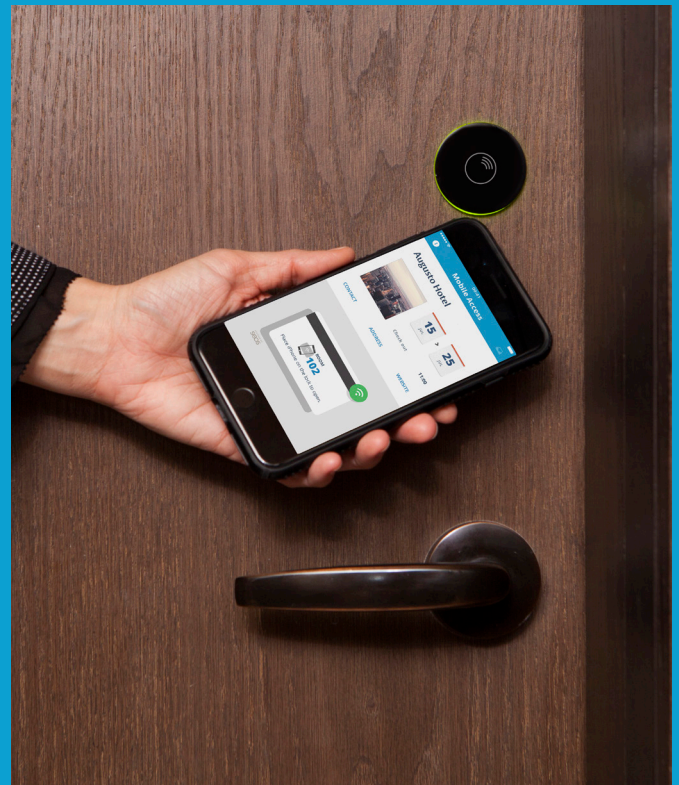
One of RFID's most significant long term benefits for the hospitality industry lies in its ability to accommodate ongoing changes in market needs and demands. As more and more guests come to expect the presence of contactless RFID technology, hoteliers working with reputable security access providers can typically upgrade existing locks with minimal effort or expense. Such providers understand the need to future proof their solutions and as a result, ensure that their magstripe products have the ability to be upgraded by simply adding an RFID reader. With this advantage, hoteliers can eliminate the need to purchase new lock hardware and can upgrade whenever appropriate and with minimal disruption to operations.



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As with RFID, mobile technology has also been recognized as a factor upending the way hotels offer services across the spectrum of their operations. With studies indicating that 67 percent of guests would select a smartphone-enabled hotel over a non-enabled one,⁹ hospitality leaders are looking at all areas where mobile functionality can be used to enhance the guest experience. Notably, several leading RFID-based door lock platforms are now capable of adapting mobile technology to serve as a means of room access in a manner that is affordable and able to be implemented on a property's own terms. With properties increasingly embracing mobile access around the world, hoteliers considering the implementation of any RFID security access solution should also aspire to work with a provider that offers truly future proof solutions, so that they can be upgraded with just the simple addition of a mobile access-compatible reader.

As guests increasingly become aware of the benefits of mobile access, considering whether a door lock's design provides the capacity to quickly add that capability can ultimately help maintain a property's reputation and its ability to maintain high guest satisfaction levels.



⁹ <http://www.softwareadvice.com/hotel-management/industryview/technology-use-report-2015/>

Working with a Reputable Security Access Provider to Meet Industry Demands Head On

As an industry that must meet multiple objectives in order to ensure guest satisfaction, hospitality's adoption of RFID is sure to continue to grow. With guests accustomed to receiving instant service from the moment they arrive, it is in the interest of each hotelier to evaluate how RFID can work to address such needs, while maintaining guest and staff safety at all times.

By partnering with ASSA ABLOY Global Solutions, properties can deliver a level of functionality that is increasingly expected of hospitality markets around the world, while maintaining the highest standard in hotel security. With ASSA ABLOY Global Solutions, hoteliers can also be sure of their ability to address any need to upgrade security access solutions from the very moment it arises, and in a way that always takes budgets and guest satisfaction into account.

<http://www.hotelnewsme.com/news/security-in-the-spotlight-2/>

“RFID technology has been one of the most game-changing innovations to revolutionise hotel operations in recent years, with security being no exception. Features such as superior anti-cloning technology ensures that only authorised users obtain entry to respective areas by preventing attempts at key copying, an issue which can be very common with older technologies.”

- Manit Narang, vice president, MEAL,
ASSA ABLOY Global Solutions (Hotel News Middle East)

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