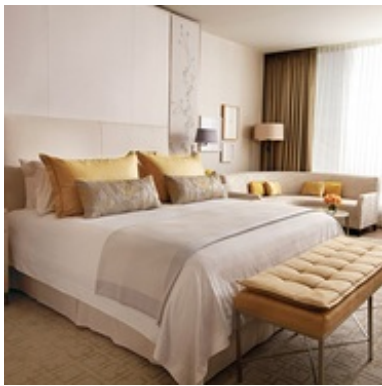


INTERNET

Technology makes consumers active participants in interior design

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Four Seasons bed

By KAYSORIN

While technological breakthroughs in the last 10 years have had a significant impact on the world of interior design, future innovations are poised to permanently change the relationship between consumers and designers.

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Industry experts speaking on the "The Internet of Design: How Technology is Changing the Design Landscape" panel during D&D Market Week agree that developments in 3D visuals and live-streaming will allow consumers to use the Internet to participate more directly in interior design. It is important for brands to take advantage of these new technologies as they become available and to seamlessly integrate them into their online and mobile marketing strategies.

"The internet is a great equalizer, and it allows people to find information," said Campion Platt, architect and interior designer. "There is a lot of technology in gaming that is coming into the interior design world.

"Technologies derive from other markets. Bandwidth advances in the future will allow us to upload videos and create rich interactive environments."

The third degree

The new developments in technology that are taking place have the ability to affect interior design in a number of ways. While social networks provide new communities, changes in photography and bandwidth speed can alter the way in which consumers view products online.



Image from Versace's recent Periscope broadcast

In recent years, innovations in social networking have fostered a unique space for designers and consumers to connect online. Web sites like eBay and Facebook have created communities for people with similar interests to share thoughts and images with one another.

Newer applications such as Instagram and Snapchat have a large potential to bring consumers together in new ways. For example, **Chairish** has begun hosting live shopping trips via Instagram in which a designer posts images online and consumers can bid in real time.



Image from Frette's new Web site

Live-streaming apps such as Periscope will facilitate these experiences, giving consumers access to products and designers that may not be available locally.

Improvements in photography and digital imaging can allow consumers to view products

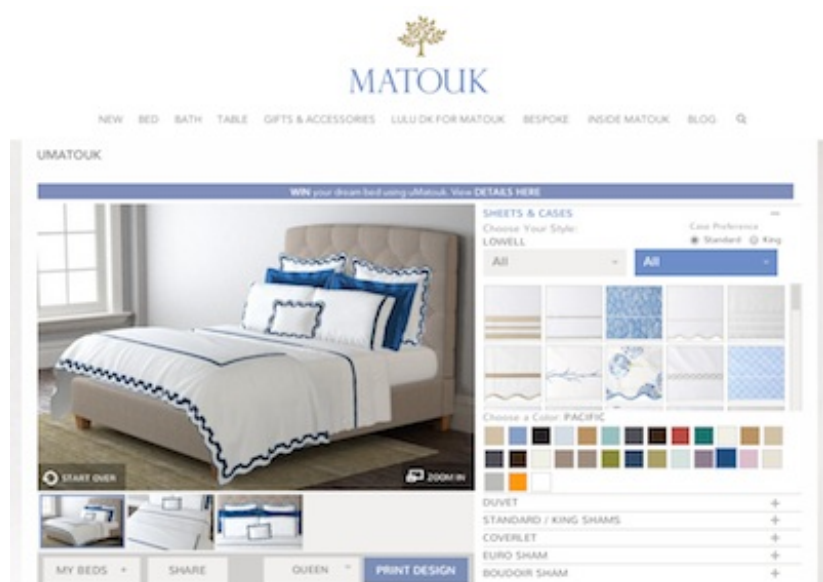
more accurately before purchasing. Innovations in 3D visuals make it easier to see scale and proportion in images, providing a clearer picture of what a room will look like when it is finished.



Dornbracht's new smart faucet

Some brands have already begun to take advantage of these new technologies. For example, U.S. linen maker Matouk helped consumers visualize their “perfect bed” with its first online configurator.

For example, Matouk allows both retailers and consumers to mix and match bedding to create their own combinations, which appear on a photorealistic 3D bed. Since it can be difficult to imagine how the range of possibilities would look once on an actual bed, this tool will help to make the decision process easier, and make consumers more confident in their final choice ([see story](#)).



Matouk's Web site

Intellectual property

New technology can also be used to improve products directly, offering unique solutions by targeting consumers' specific needs. Smart products can use environmental cues to obtain information and react accordingly.

This technology could allow appliances such as dishwashers and ovens to be powered remotely, so that consumers have the ability to turn them off or on from a distance. These innovations are not only convenient for the consumers, but also environmentally friendly and waste reducing.

Some companies have already begun to offer smart appliances for luxury kitchens. For example, German faucet and fixture brand Dornbracht helped make running water more high-tech with a new Smart Water system.

From remembering family member's preferences in the shower to measuring water for consumers in the kitchen, the concept is designed to "enhance everyday experiences." As technology becomes more integrated in consumers' lives, enabling electronic controls in the kitchen and bathroom provides a service ([see story](#)).

This new technology will undoubtedly change the relationship between designers and consumers.

"There is a fusion between the Internet and designers," Mr. Platt said. "Better tools are coming to help everyone in the industry.

"Designers are becoming more editors and curators of peoples' taste instead of doing the shopping for them, because they can do that on their own and get discounts on their own now."

Final Take

Kay Sorin, editorial assistant on Luxury Daily, New York

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