

design concepts

Designing Homes for the 21st Century

Technology and design converge in homes of the future

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Technology offers a full array of entertaining and intriguing possibilities.

What if a refrigerator had a built-in television?

What if an Internet-connected refrigerator could download recipes and record ingredients by reading bar codes? It could monitor how long a product has been on its shelves, tell when contents are running low or check expiration dates.

What if it could e-mail a shopping list to the grocery store?

Or how about telling an oven to start heating dinner, you'll be home in an hour?

New technology for the home emerges every day. Options coming on the market now, and concepts still on the horizon, are attractive to multi-tasking homeowners.

An Internet-connected refrigerator is available that can connect with the stove and microwave and direct them to set temperatures and timers.

Today's smart-home technology "takes ordinary electronics and makes them more useful," says Sean Jacobs, owner and surfaces specialist of JP Kitchen Design in Oconomowoc.

Technology for the home is advancing quickly, and so are the options. It is really up to individual homeowners to decide how to use new technology in practical ways.

Late at night, a touch of a button opens the garage door, turns on outside lights and switches on the necessary lights inside the home. This technology appeals to the security conscious, as well as those looking for convenience when there are armloads to carry inside.

A security system combines a video camera system with the home's doorbell, lighting and communications. A visitor ringing



Technology is changing the world of kitchen design. Kitchen showrooms are not only featuring countertops and cabinets, but technology as well, as in this model kitchen in the showroom at JP Kitchen Designs in Oconomowoc.



A visitor ringing the doorbell activates lighting and a video camera, and it allows the homeowner to see and communicate with the visitor.

the doorbell activates lighting and a video camera, and it allows the homeowner to communicate with the visitor. The same system can be connected to a home's phone system and television.

Technology is also changing the world of kitchen design so that kitchen showrooms are not only featuring countertops and cabinets, but technology as well.

The convergence of technology and home design is a result of "cocooning" that "stems from 9/11, when people wanted to stay in, but disposable income was still there," Jacobs says.

The kitchen is often thought of as the heart of the home, but it can also be the hub of activity. A new system features a 5.4-inch, flat-panel LCD screen that can be installed to control the housewide intercom, funnels music throughout the house, controls heating and cooling, and can monitor cameras installed in a baby's room or aimed at a shoreline. The system can even run televisions and DVD players.

For homeowners who prefer to take the connectivity and the control panel with them throughout the house,


making your computer a multimedia system. A television is hooked up to the computer, making it useful to view, store, organize and edit home photos and home videos.

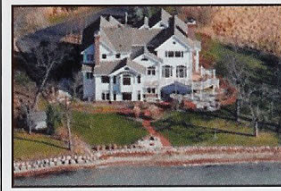
"Some of these items aren't cheap, but the price will keep coming down as time goes on," Jacobs says.

In the future, homeowners will be looking for even more gadgets and gizmos.

One high-tech concept that has been discussed but is not available yet is a crystallized-glass countertop. The image within the countertop could be programmable, showing images to match your decor or customize your kitchen. Kitchen designs change about every 10 years. "What if you could change the appearance of your countertop just by hitting a button on your keypad?" asks Jacobs.

As the demand for smart technology grows and more technology becomes available, homebuyers in the future will likely be looking for more technology and automated systems to be included as standard features.

Imagine the possibilities. 



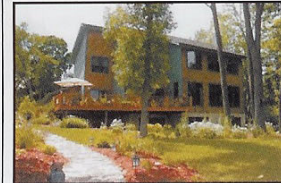
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