

identity[®]

ISSUE 103
YEAR TEN
APRIL 2012
A MOTIVATE PUBLICATION



Iberian views: a Spanish ode to design
Bags of style: on the road with Benshetrit

DHS 15





new *More To See* system boasts a sophisticated wireless hi-fi sound system with *iPod* and MP3 player connections and six-way speakers which can be integrated with mirrors from its *More To See* and *Memento* collections; Bossini's *Aquavolo* shower system features a rotational showerhead with built-in audio system that can be connected to any type of music device



What next? Controlling our bathroom devices by waving or even running a bath via thought control? The answer is, quite possibly. The *Qbo* robot music player can be controlled by hand gestures and Toyota, Deeplocal, Parlee Cycles and Saatchi & Saatchi have already developed a concept bicycle that lets riders change gear using their mind.

"The bathroom could even respond to your moods," Future Poll says. "Professor Lijun Yin at Birmingham University is developing a computer that recognises a user's emotional state, while Professor Peter Robinson of the

University of Cambridge is also developing systems that can identify emotions from facial expressions, voice and body language."

Social media disciples will be pleased to hear that designers are promising to transform the future bathroom into an entertainment hub. James Law's *Cybertecture Mirror Concept* communicates with the user's computer and mobile phone, showing messages from friends in the mirror at the same time as monitoring health and fitness levels, while *Plungr* – a social network concept that aims to unite people in the bathroom – is proposed by social media satirist Alex Blagg.

"Gamification, which encourages desired behaviour by taking advantage of humans' psychology predisposition to play means that – inevitably – gaming will enter the bathroom," Future Poll adds. Consequently we can look forward to motion-controlled gaming in the bath, E Ink shower curtains for browsing the internet and choosing the backdrop for our bathing experience through interactive surfaces.

Designers are only too happy to embrace entertainment in the bathroom. Braun has developed a toothbrush that displays a happy face to reward thorough brushing, while Romy Design has created an interactive mirror for children that lets them play with characters and be part of the story, using touch-screen and motion-capturing software.

"Other technologies will migrate to the bathroom," Future Poll predicts. "Sound games, such as *The Nightjar* by Somethin' Else, are played using only the ears, while a touch screen will develop using motion or voice-control, enabling us to play hands-free in the shower or bath. Updatable digital displays printed on to fabric with E Ink have been developed by E Ink Holdings. And flexible touch screens containing graphene are being developed by researchers at Rice University – technology which means the shower curtain of the future has the potential to display today's new or your friends' Facebook updates."

Today's bathroom designers and manufacturers have embraced the digital revolution. Technology designed to take away the stress and complexities of everyday life and intuitive controls that can be customised to suit each user's needs are at the heart of this growing trend. Options range from the basic hands-free, automatic sensor brassware and digitally controlled shower systems, to truly innovative multimedia systems and even electronic WCs.

Sensor-operated brassware is well established in the contract market, owing to its hygienic and water-saving properties, and recently it has begun to infiltrate the domestic market. *Lumi Touch* brassware from Laufen, for example, features