

Offices Switch to Smart Ware

Cubicles which switch off lights as you step out, smart access cards which can store virtual money and help you buy food from canteen, intelligent lifts, printers, networks, computers and even doors and windows and air conditioners, welcome to the Gen-next smart office.

The old paper and pen office is passe'. You don't even need to enter your office. The office of 2008 is virtual. All you need is a laptop with a wi-fi, a blackberry and a bluetooth device.

Apart from the virtual office, the conventional brick and mortar office has also gone intelligent. You can switch on the air conditioner of your office cabin, regulate its temperature and control other office gadgets as soon as you step in your car. All you need is a mobile phone or laptop with a web connection.

ConnectGaia.com offers such a solution for about Rs 22,000 where in you can control your office. Anybody logging on to connectgaia.com can measure, visualize, analyze, control and save electricity consumption anytime from anywhere in the world.

The solution is important for corporates – from government offices to shopping malls and manufacturing facilities. Manesar based Samon Electronics India, a manufacturer of printed circuit boards has been able to achieve energy savings of 9288kWh per annum with such a solution.

Another possible feature of a smart office today is a smart access card which stores your car parking data/token, canteen voucher, GPS location, virtual money which you can easily redeem at the near retail store or a restaurant at a nearby mall or buy movie tickets from the same.

Any additional days worked or an incentive for a process can be stored in the access card by the HR when it is punched in the access system. The money is filled in as soon as it is punched. Another smart feature is an intelligent lift / elevator which positions itself near to a floor in a skyscraper where it senses more entry and exits at the particular time of a day. Of course, security monitoring, dust, CO2 and PM10 levels



Offices are set to become smarter and intelligent with a host of devices that will transform the workplace into a high-tech environment



security monitoring due to CCFLs and KPIF tags is already in vogue in most offices.

Another smart feature in smart offices is a desktop voice and video solution. For instance, [Polycom](#) provides Polycom Communicator, a portable and affordable personal speakerphone. The Polycom Communicator features software integration with Skype, BroadSoft's BroadWorks Communicator, CounterPath eyeBeam and X-Lite and Polycom PVX applications to deliver a high definition voice quality, which includes wideband audio (device supports up to 22 kHz), echo cancellation, full-duplex (two-way) conversations and dynamic



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COUNTRY MANAGER, TOSHIBA INDIA

resources. "Toshiba has developed the first e-bridge MFP (Multi Functional Printer). An added advantage for customers from e-studio would be to simplify resources, workflows and maximise the use of shared resources. The A3 market is growing at 30% per annum and we feel that it will continue to grow in the same way," says Nalini Jolly, Country Manager, Toshiba India.

Another smart feature is intelligent operating systems like Windows Mobile 6.0, where in complete Microsoft Office are available on the move. Here all features of Microsoft Office including Word, Excel, Powerpoint, Pocket MSN, Outlook, Internet explorer and PDF viewers can be accessed while on the move.

Escape routing and smart lighting systems are also a must. Honeywell's Escape Routing Systems comprises Emergency Luminaires and Exit Signs, which enables safe evacuation of a building during emergencies like fire, earthquake, etc. Emergency Luminaire is automatically switched on when the normal lighting system fails and provides sufficient light along an escape route. This is called Safety Lighting and is a basic necessity in any high rise building and is standardized by law across countries. The exit signs indicate directions along escape routes and safely guide the occupants of the building in the minimum possible time. This is called way guidance system.

Large areas in a building where there is a probability that several people will congregate during an emergency situation, or where several escape routes lead to the noted areas, must be illuminated by at least 0.5 lux at floor level for proper visibility. Emergency Lighting Systems are most required in

noise reduction.

The integration also allows users to launch the soft phone or video application, as well as answer and hang up calls and control call volume and mute, directly from buttons on the Polycom Communicator device. This allows users to minimise the disruption of answering a call while working with other applications on their PC. The PDA-sized device is small enough to fit in a coat pocket for easy portability, features a built-in USB cable that also powers the device, and includes a pair of high-fidelity, 360-degree microphones that enable natural conversations with small groups.

Another smart feature is an integrated MFD (Multifunction devices) as those provided by HP. HP's new multifunction printer (MFP) lineup adds to the HP LaserJet portfolio, which offers the industry's most complete set of options for both enterprise and small-to mid-size business customers. The HP LaserJetM1005 for instance, is a personal mono laser, multi function printer with printing, copying and scanning functions. In today's busi-

ness environment when one has to race against time and make the most of the limited budget and space M1005 is an ideal printer. Priced at Rs. 12999, it comes with a 32 MB RAM and is a good alternative for consumers who need voluminous printing and copying.

The new line up of MFDs also consists of the HP Universal Print Driver (UPD) virtually eliminates the need for IT staff to manage individual print drivers and makes printing easy for users by providing one single driver and one single interface for all networked HP printers. By delivering real-time print job and print device information, HP UPD empowers end users to resolve issues themselves and place fewer calls to the help desk.

Electronic notepad on desktops are another good solutions. For instance, through Microsoft's One Note 2007 multiple people can work on and see the same electronic note on their laptop screens at the same time - Collaborative note taking in the new version of OneNote.

Unlike paper-based systems, word processing programs, e-mail systems, or other productivity programs, Office OneNote 2007 delivers the flexibility to gather and organize text, pictures, digital handwriting, audio and video recordings, and more — all in one digital notebook on computer. While future offices may be paperless those who still want to use paper could opt for Xerox reusable paper. This is ideal for documents that have a shelf life of just a few hours. The ink will disappear enabling the paper to be reused!

Another features is Unified Communications. With Microsoft's Unified Communications, you can find out if people are "in/out/available/busy" without having to disturb them. You can choose where you want your calls to ring - your desk phone or your mobile. One can also cancel or change a meeting and automatically notify all attendees by "talking to Outlook (Exchange Server 2007)"

The smart office of today is also green and inspires people to work in it and companies like IBM, HP, Sun Microsystems and Toshiba are innovating to deliver on that.

Toshiba has also been innovating and has come out with a printer solution for maximising shared

essential areas like the following where non-maintained luminaries of at least one hour duration are to be installed for instance, escalators, lifts, toilets, generator, control and plant rooms, pedestrian routes in covered car parks.

In addition, desktop virtualisation like that provided by Citrix and SOHO office solution like that provided by iYogi can make your office cool. iYogi provides live computer support for home and small business users globally for technologies that we use everyday. iYogi's live 24/7 support extends to multiple brands of computers, software and peripherals. iYogi.net also offers a Green PC initiative for the user.

According to Energy Star, a joint program between the Environmental Protection Agency and the US Department of Energy, users can save upto \$75 per desktop PC annually through power management. iYogi's Green PC initiative is a customized service that increases the energy-efficiency of users' computers starting with three primary undertakings: computer assessment, analyzing settings and PC energy use, customized efficiency plan, geared specifically to the individual's usage patterns and implementing setting changes to maximize the computer's energy use. With such nifty tools for the office, going to work is set to be a very different experience.

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