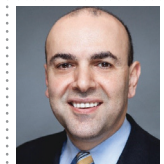




# Technology & Elevators

By Ray Eleid



Ray Eleid

If I suggested that technology is quickly taking over the world, and we've become utterly dependent on it, you would not be shocked. As a society, we love the convenience of renewing our driver's license and plate sticker online, shopping for groceries online, paying bills, and sending money in an instant, all from the comfort of our home using our computer. What if I told you that technology and digitization are also evolving into something as mundane as elevators? Would you be shocked, or would you see this as normal and expected?

## Internet of Things

While the term "Internet of Things" (IoT) is not new to some industries, it is a relatively new buzzword in the vertical transportation sector. In

simple terms, IoT refers to devices that are connected and communicate together via the internet. Applied to the elevators in your buildings, it means they will be connected to the internet to access details regarding the elevator performance and functions. For example, some companies like KONE have partnered with IBM Watson to farm your elevator data to predict the outcome of the elevator performance. It is hoped that by crunching data, they would be able to predict the callbacks and the expected failures of the elevators and escalators. The huge volume of data would be too overwhelming for an individual to understand and trend, but for a supercomputer, it is easy. They can crunch data and trend data with millions of iterations until a trend is detected and a predictable model developed that can assist mechanics in addressing problems before they arise.

## Quick Troubleshooting

While IoT strategies rely on computer connectivity to drive reliability, another approach by Thyssenkrupp, using Microsoft Oculus, focuses on helping mechanics improve elevator troubleshooting. This technology equips mechanics with a wearable, interactive device that allows them to look at a controller and quickly access model-specific troubleshooting manuals, identify parts, or play video on how to replace parts. Another feature is "phone an engineer" so that a remote engineer can see what the mechanic is watching and assist with the troubleshooting. Once deployed, it would be a far superior method compared to current methodologies like elevator-WIKI.

## Access for All

Not to be outdone, regulatory authorities are also evolving to web-based solutions for consumers and building

security that will protect your property and residents.

Technology has enabled solutions that go far beyond the brass keys of yesteryear. This includes features such as mobile credentials, cloud-based access control and wireless locks.

It's also worth noting that modern security is not only about controlling access. It is also about having the ability to control how the property behaves. For example, if you can lock down a property with the push of a button or use a camera that will keep a secure image of all people who have entered a property, with the option to use thermal cameras to record their temperature. Again, these advancements will help define modern security.

### Smart

The pandemic has embedded technology into our lives more than ever. Quarantines have driven virtually all of us to rely on technology in new ways, and those habits are likely to stick.

Many Canadians expect that working from home will be the new norm in the post-pandemic world. A recent survey by Research Co. and Glacier Media found that almost three in four Canadians (73%) expect more employees to work from home in the wake of this pandemic.

Collectively, this means tech-enabled homes will matter even more. If people are spending more time at home, features such as programmed lighting and smart thermostats will be

more important. And they're willing to pay more for them, too. Commercial real estate company Avison Young conducted a tenant survey in 2018 to gauge what Canadian renters want most. It found that, on average, they're willing to spend an extra \$17 per month for a smart thermostat.

Beyond a competitive advantage in the marketplace, these upgrades also improve efficiency. Most of these features save energy and can be controlled remotely by property managers, ensuring the best level of service possible.

Indeed, the pandemic will have ripple effects on property management, like most things in life. It's important to remember that during times of great turmoil, we see great shifts in thinking. As we emerge from this crisis, people will crave more innovative ways to protect themselves and their properties. Embracing that new reality now will help you emerge as an industry leader well into the future and remain ahead of the curve. ■

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owners. In New York, all the elevator and escalator code violations are posted online so that anyone can easily see the status of an elevator in real-time. Similarly, in Ontario, the Technical Standards and Safety Authority (TSSA) is building a portal for building owners to determine the status of the elevators and escalators and access all outstanding violations.

Consultants are also developing their own systems and solutions that allow building owners to determine the number of callbacks placed daily; the status of the elevator/escalator (running or shutdown); the number of maintenance hours being spent on-site every month; the status of the government reports, the status of the consultant report; if a trend is forming with the callbacks; and much more. These services are available online and in real-time. IoT is here to stay, and we will see an acceleration in its advancement as fresh new technologies emerge. ■

**Ray Eleid** is a graduate electrical engineer who worked for two international elevator companies, one national elevator company and Canada's largest elevator consulting firm. Ray has over 24 years of elevator related experience in various capacities as an elevator mechanic; maintenance supervisor; training coordinator for new product development; construction and modernization supervisor; branch manager; and now an elevator consultant.  
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