

IRM Gets Cookin' in the Digital Kitchen

The CABA Internet Home Alliance Research Council (IHA), a network of leading companies advancing the home technology market, announced the results of its Digital Kitchen Study at the 2007 Kitchen/Bath Industry Show (K/BIS) at the Las Vegas Convention Center in May. The study was intended to determine the consumer electronics and appliances already in use in American kitchens and which new products or services homeowners would like to add to their kitchens in the future.

A cross-industry collaboration involving IHA members Whirlpool Corporation, Bell Canada, Cisco Systems, Inc., Direct Energy, HP, HomeCrest Cabinetry, Intel Corporation, Microsoft, The National Association of Home Builders (NAHB) Institute of Residential Marketing (IRM), and the National Kitchen and Bath Association (NKBA), the study yielded results that have been used to create the ideal digital kitchen, which were unveiled in a full-size display in the Industry Trends Marketplace of K/BIS.

Conducted by Zanthus, a research and consulting firm, the Alliance's Digital Kitchen Study was based on a survey that reached 602 homeowners between the ages of 25 and 64 who have broadband Internet access and household incomes of more than \$35,000 per year. An equal number of men and women responded, each reporting that they made the primary purchasing decisions for kitchen appliances and consumer electronics in their households. The survey results showed that the kitchen still functions as the nerve center of the house, and most families do much more than just cook and eat there. Other popular kitchen activities include talking on the phone, leaving messages and reminders for other family members, entertaining friends, paying bills, planning schedules and events, watching TV, and doing homework.

In terms of kitchen use, consumers reported wanting to – and not wanting to – use the kitchen as follows:

- **Kitchen as control center, not entertainment center.** While some who are remodeling their kitchen said they want to watch movies and videos

in the kitchen, the vast majority (85 percent) of homeowners said they don't see themselves watching videos or movies in the kitchen, perhaps because those are activities that need time and attention, two things in short supply when making dinner. In addition, the vast majority (93 percent) would not play video games in their ideal kitchen. There are just two entertainment-oriented items that consumers want in their ideal kitchen of the future: a TV and wireless Internet access.

- **Crack the books, but not where you crack the eggs.** According to the survey, 48 percent of children do their homework in the kitchen. But the survey also found that the majority of parents (59 percent) prefer that their children NOT do their homework in the kitchen. According to parents, the ideal kitchen is not an ideal place for doing homework.

- **Keep the Play-Doh away from the cookie dough.** In homes with children, 43 percent reported doing arts and crafts in the kitchen. But 69 percent of all parents say they don't want their kids doing arts and crafts projects in the kitchen. In homes without children, the survey found that crafting activities rarely take place in the kitchen.

- **Weather or Not.** The survey revealed that 37 percent of homeowners would like to check the weather from their kitchen. However, an on-demand weather information device was chosen by just 12 percent of respondents as something they'd like in their ideal kitchen. It may be that a device which provides weather information only, is less appealing than wireless Internet access in the kitchen, which can transmit a variety of content.

"We were pleased to participate in the Digital Kitchen Study," said Michael Copp, Hon. MIRM, assistant staff vice president of Specialized Member Services. "The results of the study will contribute to our goal of building a knowledge community within the IRM and, in this case, help our members better understand the types of functionality, design and technology that consumers desire within the heart of the home—the kitchen."

For more information, visit www.caba.org/iha. **SMI**