

Internet Home Alliance Releases Digital Kitchen Study Results Consumers Reveal What's Happening in American Kitchens Today and What Technology Innovations They Want Most in the Future

Ideal Digital Kitchen to be on Display at Kitchen/Bath Industry Show

May 7, 2007, K/BIS, Las Vegas, Nevada – CABA Internet Home Alliance Research Council, a network of leading companies advancing the home technology market, will announce tomorrow at the 2007 Kitchen/Bath Industry Show (K/BIS) at the Las Vegas Convention Center, the results of its Digital Kitchen Study, intended to determine how consumers are using their kitchens today and what technology innovations homeowners would most like to add to their kitchens in the future.

A cross-industry collaboration involving Internet Home Alliance members Whirlpool Corporation, Bell Canada, Cisco Systems, Inc., Direct Energy, HP, HomeCrest Cabinetry, Intel Corporation, Microsoft, The National Association of Home Builders (NAHB), and the National Kitchen and Bath Association (NKBA), the study yielded results that have been used to create the “ideal digital kitchen,” which will also be unveiled at K/BIS. Owned by NKBA, K/BIS, which runs from May 8-10, is the world’s largest international trade event dedicated to the kitchen and bath industry. The ideal digital kitchen will be on display at K/BIS in the Industry Trends Marketplace (South Hall) on the second floor near aisle marker S11000.

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 functions as the nerve center of the house, with most families doing much more than just cooking and eating there. Other popular kitchen activities include entertaining friends, watching TV, doing homework, paying bills, talking on the phone, planning schedules and events and leaving messages and reminders for other family members.

“The kitchen is clearly the hub of the home but, surprisingly, bigger kitchens aren’t necessarily better for most U.S. homeowners,” said Tim Woods, vice president, Internet Home Alliance. “For example, we thought that a desk or workstation would be a popular kitchen addition but, in fact, most homeowners told us that a computer on a counter worked just as well. The key was an innovative kitchen design that freed up counter space.”

Designed by NKBA certified kitchen designer, Blue Arnold, the Alliance’s ideal digital kitchen features the following innovations, which the Digital Kitchen study found to be most desired by consumers:

Digital Calendar. The survey found that the primary kitchen user is also the primary schedule keeper and a digital calendar was the most preferred concept of the 22 concepts tested. Those surveyed reported wanting a calendar on a large screen that allows users to add appointments and post notes that everyone in the household can see and access, whether from the kitchen or via the Internet.

PAGE TWO/IHA DIGITAL KITCHEN STUDY

Recipe Projection System. Eight in ten of those surveyed said they cook for enjoyment, and 64% do so at least several times per week. Consumers reported wanting a wireless recipe projection system that would allow them to look up a recipe online, or even say aloud what they want to cook (e.g. "beef stroganoff"), and then have the recipe projected onto a surface in the kitchen from a small cabinet-mounted device.

Energy Usage Monitoring and Control System. Those surveyed reported wanting to monitor energy consumption by area (family room, swimming pool, etc.) and appliance (hot water heater, etc.); to monitor energy usage by circuit; to chart peak energy usage times; to diagnose areas of wasted energy; and to calculate energy costs. This concept was most popular in the West where California recently became the first state in the nation to impose an emissions cap on utilities, refineries and factories.

Home Control Station. Consumers want a home control station in their kitchen that allows them to manage their HVAC and security systems easily. Specifically, they requested a screen where they can view the temperature inside and outside of their home, adjust the thermostat on a touch pad and view live video of both the front and back of their house. This functionality is equally appealing to households with and without children.

Universal Charging Station. Consumers reported wanting to charge up to three cell phones or PDAs simultaneously, regardless of brand or model. One-third of households reported that they currently keep their cell phones on the kitchen counter and one-half said they keep their phone chargers there as well. Consumers would like a Universal Charging Station so everyone can charge their phones in the spot where their phones and chargers are usually kept.

Wireless Internet Access. Consumers want a wireless network in their home so they can have wireless Internet access in all rooms, including the kitchen. Twenty-nine percent of homeowners and 43% of those remodeling their homes want to surf the Web while in the kitchen. Consumers reported wanting Internet access for emailing and Web surfing and don't want to use a PC in the kitchen for offline applications. Wired Internet access is not desired; just 5% of homeowners said they wanted wired Internet access in their kitchen.

The survey results suggest that most consumers are looking for functionality and control from their kitchens, rather than entertainment. But while most respondents showed little interest in watching movies or playing video games in the kitchen, they do want a television there. Right now, 33% of homeowners watch TV in the kitchen, 43% want to watch TV in their ideal kitchen, and 51% of respondents planning to remodel their kitchens in 2007 intend to include a television.

The results also suggest that marketers and retailers should assume that both husbands and wives firmly believe that their opinions and choices prevail, both for appliances and consumer electronics.

"Whirlpool's ongoing consumer insight research has found that consumers want to free up cluttered counters and streamline the device charging process with a universal charging station," said David Swift, president of Whirlpool North America. "For example, one of our latest innovations, the centralpark™ connection, will help consumers achieve their ideal kitchen by providing a plug-and-play platform right on the refrigerator door."

PAGE THREE/IHA DIGITAL KITCHEN STUDY

Consumers reported the following regarding how they are currently using their kitchens and would like to use their kitchens in the future:

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%) 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%) 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.

Keep the Play-Doh away from the cookie dough. In homes with children, 43% reported doing arts and crafts in the kitchen. But 69% 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.

Crack the books but not where you crack the eggs. According to the survey, 48% of children do their homework in the kitchen. But the survey also found that most parents (59%) would prefer their kids do their homework elsewhere.

Weather or Not. The survey revealed that 37% of homeowners would like to check the weather from their kitchen. However, an on-demand weather information device was chosen by just 12% 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.

About the CABA Internet Home Alliance Research Council

The CABA Internet Home Alliance Research Council is a cross-industry network of leading companies engaged in collaborative research to advance the connected home space. The Alliance's research projects enable participating companies to gain important insights into the connected home space and leverage those insights into viable new business opportunities. Internet Home Alliance Research Council is part of the Continental Automated Buildings Association (CABA), a not-for-profit industry association that promotes advanced technologies for the automation of homes and buildings. For more information about the Alliance, please visit www.caba.org/iha.

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