

## **Are Consumers Ready for a Toilet Equipped With Alexa?**

### **Describe**

Bathroom products equipped with sensors, artificial intelligence, and smart speakers were once the future of technology, but they are slowly integrating with everyday appliances. The smart bath mat by Mateo Inc. is already on the market as well as the DTV+ digital showering system by Kohler. The smart bath mat has 7,000 built-in pressure sensors, which allow for individual identification based on footprints in addition to posture and weight analysis. AI technology can alert individuals of a sudden weight gain or loss if they choose. The DTV+ shower system is essentially a \$4,000 touch-screen interface that allows for customization and control of the shower. Kohler's next smart bathroom product is the Numi 2.0 intelligent toilet, projected to reach the market second quarter. The Numi 2.0 has both proximity and pressure sensors that automatically raise the toilet's lid and trigger the flush. Besides convenience, Kohler offers customization by use of an app that works with the Numi 2.0. Users can also control the toilet's features with their voice using Amazon Alexa. In addition to this command, users can play music and check the news or weather with voice control.

### **Analyze**

*Terms: Artificial Intelligence, Smart Technology, Voice Control*

Companies are using smart technologies with built-in voice control and AI to introduce new bathroom products to the market. Instead of introducing entirely new products, companies such as Mateo Inc. and Kohler are taking everyday appliances and equipping them with innovative technologies, creating essentially new products of value. Technology has come a significantly long way since first introduced. To continue to grow, companies must adapt to these new technologies and integrate them into everyday products where possible. We are now part of a society that expects instant gratification and finding the most time-efficient way of doing things. AI makes it simpler to accomplish everyday tasks by almost knowing us better than we know ourselves. For example, the smart bath mat can use AI to warn individuals of potential health issues. Smart technology and voice control assist us in accomplishing simple tasks when we do not feel like getting up to press a button or flip a switch. It is a little

disappointing that we have come to this, but rather than dwell on it, companies are using it to their advantage. Whether we like it or not, technology is only going to advance more.

### **Evaluate**

Smart bathroom products seem unnecessary, and I think they will make us lazier. The idea of an automatic toilet with a proximity sensed lid and pressure sensed flush sound valuable to someone with physical disabilities. This idea goes hand-in-hand with voice control of these features. Someone with the physical ability to raise the lid or flush the toilet does not genuinely need the toilet to make these things happen automatically. The article suggests that the bathroom is an appropriate place to have Alexa because people tend to start and end their day there, making it a great place to ask Alexa about the weather, news, or traffic. This logic makes sense, but I am left wondering why people cannot just place their Amazon Alexa in their bathrooms in the first place. I do not see the logic behind connecting these features to bathroom products. Individuals can keep a smart speaker in their bathroom if they wish to have access to Alexa's technology in the shower or while getting ready for the day. However, as mentioned before, smart bathroom products could be extremely valuable to those with special needs due to physical disabilities. I think the companies behind these products could benefit from marketing to that specific market.

McCormick, John. "Are Consumers Ready for a Toilet Equipped With Alexa?" The Wall Street Journal, 16 Jan. 2020, [www.wsj.com/articles/are-consumers-ready-for-a-toilet-equipped-with-alexa-11579170603](http://www.wsj.com/articles/are-consumers-ready-for-a-toilet-equipped-with-alexa-11579170603).