

# Builder

OLD INTO GOLD  
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## DIGITAL HOME

SMART TECHNOLOGY FOR NEW HOMES ■ EDITED BY STEVE ZURIER



**WHO'S THERE?** When integrated with an AMX touchpanel, Techcierge allows homeowners to view visitors before they reach the front door.

## Digital Community

*Manufacturers offer a system to help homeowners manage their homes, their social activities, and more.*

**M**OST OF THE COMMUNITY INTRANETS that builders have rolled out do a good job of letting homeowners form clubs or sign up for a golf game online, but very few manage security rights well, and even fewer integrate with a homeowner's consumer electronics and home automation system.

Now, Simplikate—maker of Techcierge, an outsourced, Web-based management system for luxury condos and master planned communities—has joined forces with home automation vendor AMX to offer a system that does it all.

Techcierge, integrated with AMX's Amenity Solution, comes with a touch-

panel that lets homeowners grant access to guests and workmen, watch or listen to consumer electronics devices, and even do household tasks such as opening blinds and shades.

"The system lets a homeowner send a guest list over a PC to a front desk or security desk, view a picture of the guest on a touchpanel as they enter the complex, [and] then set the lighting and audio playlists for when the guests arrive," says Tushar Patel, CEO and founder of Simplikate.

Techcierge is offered in a good-better-best format: Good is the Techcierge service alone, which costs the HOA \$5 to \$10 a month per unit. Better is a computer server with Techcierge and the AMX software. The builder pays about \$80,000 for the server, and the association pays \$20 a month per unit for the service and use of the server. Best is Techcierge with the server and a touchpanel preinstalled. Touchpanels run from \$2,500 to \$3,000. Most builders who opt for the best solution negotiate a rebate on consumer electronics products purchased by home buyers.

Patel says Simplikate and AMX have had the most success selling to large condo and townhome projects in Miami and Las Vegas. Techcierge has been installed in projects by large developers such as The Related Group of Florida, Royal Palm Developers, and Fortune International, but Patel says home builders can apply many of the features of Techcierge and extend AMX home control to standard single-family master planned communities.

Here are the core features of Techcierge that may appeal to home builders:

■ **Visitor management.** Homeowners can issue a keyfob to a cleaning person and set specific times that (see page 78)



**KEEP IT SIMPLE:** Techcierge lets homeowners use a PC to manage community amenities over a standard Web browser.

he or she can enter the community, or they can issue a temporary pass to a contractor working on a remodeling project.

■ **Amenity management.** Techcierge makes it easy for communities to set business rules and policies. For example, Patel says that in his community, residents can reserve tennis courts for

as many as three two-hour sessions per week, and renters can reserve courts for two hours a week. If an owner signs up for a specific time on a Tuesday, say, the system will know how much playing time that person has left for the week and that he or she is an owner and has first crack at a court.

■ **Resident alerts.** The system lets management send phone alerts to residents in the event of severe weather, a missing pet, or a missing child. Techcierge stores up to five phone numbers for every unit. It can also be used by community social committees to notify residents about special events.

■ **Business services.** Communities can use Techcierge to set up a list of preferred contractors. Since the system is Web-based, vendors can sign up online, post their insurance information, and receive an online approval from the community manager. Residents who want work done that would require approval of the community's architectural board can also submit their plans online.

To learn more, go to [www.simplikate.com](http://www.simplikate.com). ■