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SITTING PRETTY

Technology makes using public restrooms a more sanitary experience

By J. Patrick Coolican
Journal Inquirer

Reflecting on the medieval plumbing in modern-day Greece, the writer David Sedaris quipped, "The Greeks built the Acropolis, invented democracy, and called it a day."

Americans and some Western Europeans, however, are disposing of their bodily wastes in new and innovative ways.

Women who've used the bathroom at the expanded Mohegan Sun casino can tell you all about it.

Bathrooms there enable women to take care of business and leave without touching a thing, except toilet paper. Toilet seats are covered with a sanitized plastic wrap, and the toilet — which flushes automatically — has a mechanism that rotates the plastic and puts it into a receptacle, replacing it with a new sheath after each use.

But the imagination needn't be restricted to the miracles of hygienic plastic. Before long, the bowl and seat will be automatically cleaned with every use — no plastic required.

Gene splicing? Self-driving cars? Smart bombs? They pale in comparison to these super toilets.

When Alan Brill was growing up, his mother warned him not to sit on an uncovered public toilet seat, lest he go blind.

Brill took her advice to heart. "I used to run home from school if I had to go to the bathroom," the Delray, Fla.-based entrepreneur says.

Brill's fears may not have been totally unfounded, according to a study his company conducted. Brill Hygienic Products found that 80 percent of people do not wash their hands after using a public restroom.

Until a few years ago, Brill ran his own public relations firm in New York City, until his hygienic bathroom obsession could no longer be ignored. He had a brainstorm, and hired an engineer to build a prototype of a toilet that would remain clean.

The finished product, unveiled in 1998, had a motorized dispensing system activated by a button, removing the old plastic and replacing it with fresh plastic.

Last year the company added a motion-detection system so that the unit is now

**WAVE HAND IN FRONT OF
GREEN WALL
MOUNTED
SENSOR
FOR FRESH
PLASTIC
SEAT COVER.
STOPS AUTOMATICALLY!**

OR

**PRESS
GREEN BUTTON
ON TOP OF SEAT**



U.S. Patent No. 5,937,448

hands-free.

Toilets that automatically flush once activated by an infrared motion detector became prevalent about four years ago. The technology reduces vandalism and allows hands-free use.

Brill's system is used on more than 500 toilets in women's restrooms at Mohegan Sun. The units aren't installed in the men's

rooms, because they are designed for sit-down use only.

Brill estimates that the hands-free system saves each user one minute for every trip to the bathroom.

In a casino, time is money, so Mohegan Sun has no problem paying the 4 cents per flush the system costs.

Users at Mohegan Sun are "totally over-

whelmed and thoroughly thrilled" with the units, says the casino's director of environmental services, Mark Cloutier.

Other large, public facilities are taking notice. Brill says his clients include eight major airports, several casinos, and a few Saks Fifth Avenue stores in Florida. Last year, his company sold more than \$4 million of clean bathroom experiences.

"This is the toilet for the 21st century," he says.