

Intelligent residential buildings enter the Polish market

In every dreamhome

Only a short time ago 'intelligent home' was a term used only by visionaries and science-fiction writers; but today even those with a little imagination – and the money to do so – can buy an intelligent apartment

Building Management Systems until very recently were only found in office buildings, but are now gradually entering the residences of those who give pride of place to personal safety and comfort. Western European investors became familiar with the EIB (European Installation Bus) residence management system around a dozen years ago. However, this has only lately come to the Polish market.

Appetite increasing

A comfortable, 21st-century standard apartment block is currently under construction in Włochy, a Warsaw suburb, but Silesia was the location for the first 'intelligent residences' in Poland.

According to Anna Boryczka of Millenium Investments: "We wanted to do something exceptional on the Silesian residential market, which is why

we created Millenium IQ – the first intelligent building in Silesia."

All Millenium IQ apartments were sold on the day the offer was published. A similar case is that of Park Włochy in Warsaw, developed by N.I.A. Nawrath Consulting – a company previously occupied with importing and distributing electronic devices and which was not involved in development, until now. Henryk Narwath, N.I.A. Consulting's president, makes no secret of the fact that: "Our apartments are attracting huge interest. We are not accepting reservations at the moment, but shall start selling from February 2007 when the building is roofed over. Having said that, I must add that we are being flooded with enquiries concerning our investment."

From near and afar

The EIB system installed in both of these residential buildings provides illumination, heating, window blinds, gas, electricity, air conditioning, alarm devices and a multitude of other items and is tailored for individual customers. System control is through a special panel which combines the functions of switches and connectors. Pressing a single button on the pleasantly designed panel allows lights and alarm devices to be switched on and off and music and home cinema to be tuned in, even making remote control of the

apartment possible.

Zbigniew Czerwonka of Tema, a representative of Gira, the German manufacturer of EIB systems, goes into more details: "All you need for this is a building manager Home Server. Residents will be able at any moment, via the internet or SMS, to issue an order engaging a specific device in their apartment. For example central heating can be switched on so that your apartment is warm when you return home."

In this way, substantial savings in home management costs can be made. Heating can be reduced without leaving the office and the light you left on when you went out in the morning can be switched off. It has been possible for some time to pre-program many home systems, but this did not always give the desired effect since, for instance, a resident might be forced to change the time of their return. But now when you return from work later than planned, a freshly aired home will be waiting for you with a bathtub of automatically poured warm water. Admittedly, Polish developers are not yet offering such deluxe services as standard, but they are available should the customer so desire.

Tasteful environments

The general appearance of home interiors is improved by the use of an EIB system. One



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What is the EIB

The EIB (European Installation Bus) system was developed in 1990 by the producers of electric wiring systems which combine in one all the functions of building management. The system is based on one communications busbar, through which all the media in a given property may be controlled. The EIB system enables the management of functions, each of which has been separately controlled to the present. The structure of an intelligent building is made up of the following integrated systems:

- ▶ energy management (BEMS)
- ▶ heating, ventilation, air conditioning (HVAC)
- ▶ security and safety
- ▶ access control
- ▶ fire protection
- ▶ illumination control
- ▶ telecommunications
- ▶ integrating systems with the use of computer control

(Source: Wikipedia)

tastefully designed management panel takes the place of dozens of control buttons. The design can be chosen by each according to taste and enlarged according to their needs. No longer are there any headaches with central heating radiators in such a building, since floor heating is installed, with all the necessary wiring for audio equipment and the internet also hidden under the floor.

Electronics cut costs

EIB systems have been available on the market for several years, but have been desi-

gned and installed, up to now, under a separate contract for the most wealthy customers. Today, these systems and the devices which can be installed within them are much cheaper than they once were and, thus, much more accessible. For instance, until recently very few owners could pay for installing cameras to monitor a child's room or even a whole apartment. Such a camera today can be bought for only PLN 400 to 500. Multiroom loudspeaker systems that deliver sound throughout the whole residence from stereo equipment or a domestic cinema are also much less expensive today. Henryk Nawrath comments that: "A multiroom system that once cost around PLN 50,000 to 100,000 can be purchased now for a sixth of that price."

Everlasting

The great advantage of the EIB system is not that it is very simple to service, in practice a single button is all that is needed to control it, but that it is also almost entirely failure-free – at least so claim its producers. A well designed system can be used for many years and is universal to the extent that when once installed it will prove to be durable. The only modules which may be added are those responsible for separate functions whose purposes are yet unknown and which might well be developed

in the near future. And this will happen, since, in the words of Bill Gates, who owns one of the world's first intelligent homes: "Today's intelligent buildings are tomorrow's electronic corpses."

But who can afford it?

Intelligent apartments are actually not the most costly on the Polish market.

You have to pay between PLN 4,500 and 5,000 per sqm for a Millennium IQ apartment. Prices in Park Wlochy will be higher, but this is also a reflection of the location, with apartments in Silesia being in general less expensive. Mr Nawrath remarks that: "Our apartments will cost between PLN 7,000 and 10,000 per sqm, with higher prices having to be paid for apartments with large terraces."

The envisaged cost for the whole of the city will be between 5 and 6 mln, and this is covered by the investment. Clearly, however, intelligent buildings are not the collector's pieces of a simple reason – there are only 12 of them. The investment is also an exclusive end of the road. Boryczka adds that they have designed 6 developments of between 7 and 10 sqm space in Millerów. But who will live there? They have been designed with an eye rather on modern customers of technology. In terms with technology, for not everyone is ready for the developers' servicing a 21st-century apartment is childishly simple.

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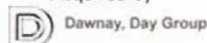


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