



Posted by Scott at [01:10 AM](#) in [What Will They Think Of Next?](#)

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OK Computer!

And the best thing is that you'll [never again have to worry about the Christmas tip](#):

[Colin] Foster is the vice president of sales and marketing for Virtual Doorman, the top product of a security firm called Virtual Service, which promises to offer residents and managers of small buildings the services of a professional doorman at a fraction of the cost -- without skimping on security or convenience.

It used to be that small walkups were second-class buildings," Foster said. "They did not fetch the same pricing as a doorman building. Now, small buildings can offer those same amenities."

Virtual Doorman is a standalone, computerized system that integrates with a building's own computers while linking its high-end color video monitors with the building's existing intercoms, Foster said.

The electronic system is manned remotely 24 hours a day by a third-party agency that is linked directly to the building's local fire department, police and medical services.

The system is monitored constantly, and can perform all the tasks of an old-fashioned, human doorman, Foster said, including screening guests, accepting deliveries and laundry, and unlocking doors for tenants who lost their keys.

Foster insists man and machine can co-exist. It is written into their policy that Virtual Doorman will not replace any members of 32BJ, the union that represents workers including New York doormen.

Still, the union thinks there's no substitution for old-fashioned manpower. "The experience and training of doormen, combined with their familiarity of residents cannot be replaced by electronic services that control building access from remote locations," according to a 32BJ statement.

"The safety of New Yorkers living in condominiums and apartments belongs in the real-life hands of diligent doormen who can maintain on-site control of their buildings."