



Electronic Locks Build Better Guest Experience

INDIANAPOLIS, January 21, 2021 – Today’s travelers expect that electronics will play a significant role in assuring a premium guest experience, including security. The journey from traditional locks to electronic ones, however, can take time, but as [Al J Schneider Company/AJS Hotels](#) in Louisville, owner of the renowned [Galt House](#), [Crowne Plaza](#), and [Embassy Suites](#), has experienced, that initial investment is the beginning of long-term benefits.

Over 30 years ago, the Al J Schneider Company recognized it needed to replace its old-style key locks with electronic locks. Kenny Franklin, Corporate Director of Facilities and 49-year member of the Al J Schneider Company team, knew it was the right thing to do, but encountered some initial difficulties.

Saflok Starts Electronic Access Conversion

“I called all the companies with electronic locks – probably four or five brands,” said Franklin. “I wanted a demo lock, sequences of cards, an e-key and a grand master key to test in our hotel. No one would send me what I asked for. Finally, the salesperson from [Saflok](#) called me back and said he’d give me whatever we needed.”

At the time, Saflok was a standalone brand. It is now part of the dormakaba family of electronic access control solutions.

Franklin knew that he would need the approval of his boss, Al J Schneider, to install the new locks. The locks were delivered the next day, however, initial testing did not go as planned. Mr. Schneider objected to a card lock system because he had heard that they “weren’t any good” from a hotel owner in Miami. Franklin was undeterred and demoed the lock, but the lock did not work properly.

“I was disappointed, but I knew that we needed to upgrade,” said Franklin. “I also knew that once we got these new locks into one hotel, we’d have to do all of our hotels in the city.”

As Franklin was leaving the demo, his pager went off. “That confirms how long ago this was,” he said. “It was Mr. Schneider asking about the cost. Saflok had submitted a quote for about \$210/door for our 710 doors. Mr. Schneider said the price was too high. I contacted our Saflok rep who was able to reduce the quote per lock and that was approved.”

The locks were installed, but Mr. Schneider wanted to be sure that they worked properly to access and secure rooms without taking away from the guest experience. Franklin says that his boss made a site visit to the first room at the first hotel with the new electronic lock.

“The first room was number 129,” said Franklin. “Mr. Schneider tried different keys every day for six-months to prove that the electronic locks were secure and then approved new locks for all hotels – about 2,600 rooms at that time.”

Since then, Saflok and other brands within the dormakaba digital suite have been keeping Al J Schneider properties secure.

“I really like the Saflok product,” said Franklin. “It’s easy to install and efficient. Once you get into the lock itself, you have six screws to change out. It takes about 15 minutes max. All you have left to do it program the lock.”

Migrating from Hard Key to Soft Key or Key Cards & BLE Adds Convenience

The Galt House Hotel is currently undergoing an \$80 million renovation. This iconic hotel was founded as a 60-room property in 1835 and is Louisville's only riverfront hotel. Today, the Galt House has over 1,300 rooms and 130,000 square feet of event space, and seven restaurants and bars.

"We're trying to migrate everything from hard key to soft key or key card for convenience," said Franklin. "That includes guest rooms, storage areas, meeting spaces, parking garages, and spas. We can program cards for specific access per user which improves property security."

The Galt House is also incorporating [Ambiance software](#) with its renovation, according to Franklin. Web-based and managed through configurable user permissions and secured system access, Ambiance users can manage guests either through the native client or interfaced through a property management system (PMS).

"We have 110 housekeepers at any given time," he said. "Sometimes a key gets lost. We used to have to make a whole new sequence of keys. Ambiance can cancel the lost key which means we only have to re-do one key. It's much more efficient."

Franklin sees BLE technology in the future to replace key cards and is already planning for that upgrade.

More than 500-million hotel guest experiences are improved by [dormakaba lodging products](#) each year. True hospitality combines convenience at the front desk, smooth access to guest rooms, and end-to-end security in the back-of-house. dormakaba focuses on all aspects of hotel operations to run more efficiently, increase guest satisfaction and reduce costs. Technology is the common thread in successful hotel guest experiences. [Learn more about the Galt House experience in a short video from dormakaba.](#)

About dormakaba

dormakaba is one of the top three companies in the global market for access and security solutions. With strong brands such as Dorma and Kaba in our portfolio, we are a single source for products, solutions, and services related to doors and secure access to buildings and rooms. With around 16,000 employees and numerous cooperation partners, we are active in over 130 countries. dormakaba is headquartered in Rümlang (Zurich/Switzerland) and generates an annual turnover of over CHF 2 billion.

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