The Veldt.

The definition of Ubiquitous is to be “everywhere” at once. In the 21st century this brings to light the term Ubiquitous Computing as this is now something we see in our everyday lives. The most common example would be the more recent devices such as the Amazon Alexa and the Google home.

The Veldt is a fictional story originally published in the 1950’s about a house that can do everything for the inhabitant. The fact it was written in the 1950’s makes it interesting as it’s the classic sci-fi topic of predicting what our future world will look like. In the story they mention the house having features such as being able to cook for you, polish your shoes, tie your shoes and so on. The main feature of the house however is the nursery that changes the room to whatever you want it to be. In terms of the simpler features, in my opinion it is scarily close to the modern idea of ubiquitous computing. Although the Amazon Alexa cant cook for you and tie your shoes, it can order you items online, tell you the time, play music for you and even control the lighting of the room. You could even go as far as to have an Alexa in every room and make your entire house function like this.

In theory, although we don’t see things like smart household objects as often as we do with Alexa’s, its entirely possible to take ubiquitous computing to the next level and even closer match it to that mentioned in The Veldt. One idea that I’ve thought about is a smart shower for example. Its entirely possible that you could have an interface in a touch screen mirror or even an iPad or similar attached to the wall in the bathroom. With this you could select your own personal settings for the shower. For example I select Rupert, and the shower knows that I like to start on heat setting 8 and gradually move it up to 9.5 during the 10 minutes I aim to be in the shower. It could even be taken further to limit me the only 10 minutes to assure that I’m not running late for Uni or work, and could even play my 3 favourite songs for me during that time – all because the “smart shower” knows who I am and what I like. An entirely possible idea like this sounds very much like what is described of the house in The Veldt.