Ultimate Guide to Home Automation

What is Smart Home Technology?

Simply put, smart home technology includes one or more connected systems, such as Audio/Video Entertainment, Lighting, HVAC, Motorized Window Shades, Door Locks or Security Cameras.   The system is supported by a robust IT network and an easy-to-use control system. A user can securely manage their home from wherever they are from a single interface on a variety of devices.
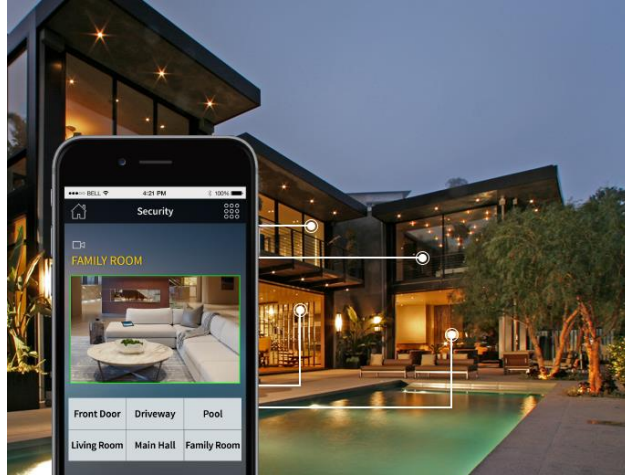

Advanced home automation enables users to put many functions on auto-pilot. For example, turning on the lights when someone walks into a room, turning down the thermostat when no one is home, opening window shades in the morning or locking doors in the evening.

New smart homes are becoming even smarter, with intelligent learning being built in so that your home can discover your preferences and adapt system functions accordingly.

Smart home technology is expanding into kitchens, living areas, bedrooms and bathrooms. Many smart homes now feature dedicated entertainment spaces that make spending time at home even more pleasurable. These include custom home theaters and brand-new spaces such as virtual reality rooms.

Monumental Technology Shifts Driving the Mass Adoption of Home Automation

Home Automation is finally being enthusiastically celebrated for its amazing high-tech prowess. For too long it's suffered from a stereotype of being too complicated, too expensive and too unreliable. But now, thanks to the proliferation of break-through developments by key manufacturers, home automation is hitting its stride. The product and service offerings have evolved and matured to become an in-demand amenity of discriminating homeowners. Here are three reasons why:

Scale-Ability

In other words, you can start with a basic home automation system and expand it a month later, a year later, whenever. Today system expansion has evolved to a practical, affordable and encouraged pathway to total home automation.

Intuitive Controls

The more devices your system can control, the more important a clean, easy-to-use interface becomes. The user interface is the device that homeowners use to interact with the subsystems (lighting, audio/video, security, etc.)

A user interface (UI) can take the form of a dedicated touch panel, a wall-mounted keypad, your smartphone or tablet. The UI provides information about and controls for every system in your house. For example, from the screen of an iPad™ (that's running the home automation app), you can see the status of the thermostat and lights and modify these settings with just a few taps of a finger.

As the dashboard and control hub of an automation system, the UI plays a vital role in the usability and performance of an automation system. Today's user interfaces are as easy to navigate as a smart phone.

Easy Integration of New Smart Products

Over the past few years the flood gates have opened, and there has been a proliferation of amazing, innovative smart home products launched in the market.

Manufacturers of disparate systems have shifted to a strategy of becoming aligned on system compatibility. This enables a variety of different products to function harmoniously under the operation of a single home automation system.

Let's break it down.
Sub-System Features & Benefits

Security Automation
Round the clock protection of your family, home and property.
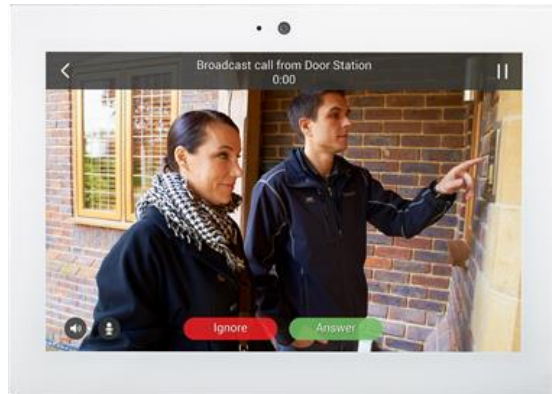

Burglar and Fire Detection
Intrusion, smoke, fire, carbon monoxide, water, vehicle presence and other hazards are detected by either wired or wireless sensors. Apps provide control via smartphone or tablet.

Security sensors also act as the eyes and ears of your home. Safety, energy management, and entertainment devices can be automated by event like door opening or motion and schedule like time or day.

Email and Text Notifications
In an emergency, your system can alert you via voice, email or text notifications.
Individual user codes can be set up for certain access on certain days, useful for maid services or landscapers. Garage doors and gates can be opened remotely.

For additional security, you can integrate wireless vehicle detection, wireless door locks, surveillance cameras, telephone back-up, and hard-wired access control.

Surveillance Automation
Keep a watchful eye on your home, from anywhere in the world.

Enjoy peace of mind with high-definition supervision.
View up to 16 high resolution IP or analog surveillance cameras.
You can swipe through your list of cameras, select a camera to view a thumbnail and click the thumbnail for full screen viewing.

Family and Property Monitoring

View live footage of nurseries, entrances, driveways, boat docks, and pool areas from anywhere in the world. Check up on a relative or pet from your smartphone or tablet.

Access Control Automation
Limit admission to designated areas.

Restrict Gate and Door Access. High security proximity card reader guards wine cellars, outbuildings and pool areas. Swipe the card once to unlock a door, or three times to activate pathway lighting, turn off the alarm, and adjust temperatures.

Who? When? Where?

Each card is tied to a specific user. Access to specific areas can be restricted to select individuals and/or particular times.

Energy Management Automation

Keep your home comfortable <u>and</u> save money on energy.
Total Energy Management

By automating temperatures, water heaters, fountains, and pumps based on time or occupancy, you can reduce your energy costs. Smart thermostats learn heating and cooling patterns for maximum efficiency and comfort.

Lighting Automation

Energy Savings + Safety + Scene Setting

Enhance the enjoyment and value of your home, improve safety, and contribute to savings on energy bills. You can automate lighting by schedule, motion detection, door openings, sunrise, sunset, alarm activation, and more.

Just touch one button to turn every light in a room or whole house on or off.
You can personalize areas for a romantic evening or a social gathering.

Hosting a special event?
Easily set lighting to emphasize points of interest such as artwork or furnishings. Limit mingling areas by lighting only rooms meant for gathering. When guests bid farewell, press one button to close your evening.

Entertainment Automation

Discover the revolutionary way to enjoy all your media, all around your home.

Set the Mood, Room by Room
With a distributed audio system, you can share your music anywhere in your home. Plug into sources you already own. No audio rack or expensive proprietary components required. Use Bluetooth to stream music via your mobile devices. Let your friends play DJ right from their smartphones or tablets. Control wirelessly via remote control, touchscreen, or smartphone for convenience.

Home Theater

Enjoy the ultimate cinema experience without leaving your house.

There is nothing like the moment when the overheads dim and brilliant images come to life on a screen before you and your loved ones…awash in light, music and sound…all in a beautiful, comfortable personal space in your own home. The power of home theater to entertain, transport and inspire is here in the form of a world-class home theater.

A home theater professional can help you configure the ultimate home cinema experience. Everything from AV packages to seating options to design themes will allow you to customize your theater to fit room size and budget.

Smart Home Controls

There are a few ways to manage your Smart Home. Each with their own unique benefits and abilities to make operating an intelligent system more intuitive.

Tablet
You can have a dedicated screen affixed to a wall or as part of an iPad interface. This is one of the easiest ways to see and manage all of your home's systems in one place.

Voice Recognition

When you can add a voice control platform such as Amazon's Alexa into your home, you can control your devices seamlessly using nothing more than your voice, meaning you can manage your music, dim the lights or even order a pizza via voice commands.

Mobile App

The most common way of controlling smart technology – whether for a single device or for a whole-home system – is using a dedicated phone or iPad app. Having a smart home app in your pocket means you can control your home both inside and out, anytime, from anywhere.

Universal Remote

A universal remote does far more than simply change the channel. It allows you to quickly switch between different video sources – from Hulu to Apple TV to a movie server – but also control the lighting, shades and other systems directly from your sofa.

Hire a Pro
Finding your smart home technology provider.

Like an architect who coordinates the design and construction of a house, a home automation integrator designs and executes a plan for the installation of various low-voltage systems and the operating system to manage everything.

The types of automation systems available are typically very sophisticated, can control a wide assortment of products, and can be programmed to do just about anything you want. Yes, you'll pay a premium for the system's extensive capabilities and the expertise of a professional to design and install the components, but it's worth it if you want a home automation system that's reliable, easy to use, and functions as a natural extension of your home.

In addition to offering top-quality automation systems, these professionals are known for offering a high level of customer service. They'll guide you through the process of integrating a system into your home, will manage the work flow among other trades that might be involved, and ensure that your system functions exactly the way you expected it to.

You can have the best automation system available, but without someone qualified to install it into your home and tailor it to your lifestyle, you won't be happy with your investment.

CEDIA®

An important credential to qualify your provider is CEDIA membership. CEDIA is the home technology trade association that provides continuing education and important certifications to its members.

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2337 Willis Miller Drive, Hudson, WI 54016