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New trends in Lighting Control and Automation Systems

Alok Hada shares a few lighting automation solutions being provided by **Anusha Technovision Pvt Ltd** to move towards smart homes...



Alok Hada

Too many homeowners neglect the meaningful tête-à-tête with their personal surroundings, and as a result, their homes fall into what can best be described as 20th century ennui or, the not-so-smart home syndrome.

Since the beginning of time, mankind has evolved towards a better living and lifestyle. It is the curiosity to know more and the aspiration for evolved standards of living that integrates humans with a world of technology and development. With this thought, as India's leading automation provider, we've rebuilt the space of 2,200sq m into a state-of-the-art, elegantly designed 'experience centre'. This experience centre is divided into sections of 'lobby', 'dining area', 'home theatre', 'show wall' and 'office area'. The whole theme is based on the motto – 'Technology at the back end and Convenience, Comfort and Ambience at the front end'. This state-of-the-art experience centre is a sheer example of what luxury should look like, and how we can offer lifestyle choices to customers that enrich their lives, add convenience and comfort, and we do so in a manner that is simple to understand and easy to use.

Home automation has been around since Joseph Henry pioneered the electric doorbell in 1831. Ever since, we've loved the idea of having our houses do things for us, making our home environment safer, cheaper to maintain, and hopefully saving us time that could be put to good use other than the daily household chores. To aid this, we talk about creating 'smart homes' by using technology that can make high-end interior spaces which are user-friendly, flexible and energy-saving. We have integrated various systems to enable a single point of control to the end-users in their homes since the past 14 years.

One of the biggest trends of 2016 is a push for

convenience and simplicity. How does this link back to your smart home solution?

a) Connecting appliances through a single point control is a growing trend that's leading to fully automated smart homes. The ability to control your home remotely through a mobile application helps you maintain an easier, carefree lifestyle.

b) Preset lighting controls that achieve the perfect lighting levels in a space, at the touch of a button are in vogue. You can remove most of the light switches cluttering up your wall and manage your lights on an elegant touchpad or mobile device. Smart lighting solutions typically use LED lights since they offer more control options, letting you adjust their intensity and colour through the user interface.

Private Residence, Mumbai – revamped space with integrated one-button press





Private Residence, Mumbai – a future-ready space with automated systems



Motorised shading system – Roman shades



Jain's Residence – experience the future as reflections articulate with Agath mirror TV



Graphic user interface

c) Motorised shades that allow the homeowner to conveniently open or close shades, are increasingly considered the norm rather than the exception.

d) Distribution of media in the house over low voltage wiring with the help of matrix switchers that help keep the TV wall 'clean', and also at the same time help share video sources among various displays, which is going to be increasingly asked for.

e) Voice activated commands for home automation with the help of Amazon Alexa and Google Smart Home devices are going to take off in the coming year.

In the quest for automation and lighting controls, we have been consistently coming out with state-of-the-art technologies enabling smart homes. Some of our recently concluded projects include Parveen Jain Residence, Gurugram and a private residence in Mumbai.

For Parveen Jain Residence, the design has a comprehensive automation strategy, where every device that has a remote is connected to a system and is controllable from within or outside the house. With a simple touch from the iPad, lighting, shades, AC, music, Tata Sky and TV, video, cameras, the main door lock, etc. everything is controllable. Further, the entire distribution of audio and video content is from a central location to achieve the design brief that there should be nothing under the TV on the wall in every room. The system is therefore designed so that everything is placed centrally (amps for music, Tata Sky boxes for TV, Apple TV, camera DVR, etc) and content is distributed on a simple Cat 6 wire.

For a private residence in Mumbai, the client wanted a complete range of lighting controls and motorised shades in the house, with a clear mandate of simplicity and ease of

access and use. The challenge here was that the living and dining areas required very large-sized shades that needed to be on a reliable motorised shading system. To add to the complexity, not only were the shades large, some were in a curvature form. To tackle this, the architect recommended that we design the system with Lutron Homeworks QS system with Lutron Sivoia Shades which is the next generation of shading technology from Lutron, and the ideal solution for total light control. Another challenge was to avoid cutting of the glass bedside panel to install wiring and back box which would have wrecked the look. To avoid this, we used Lutron wireless RF Pico keypads, which worked on Lutron's own radio frequency network and therefore ensured reliability, and were easy to use.

All the systems are designed for simplicity, and allow for ease of use as none of the homeowners have any previous experience of home automation. While their biggest apprehension is that they are investing in a technology that they may find hard to use, through our expertise, a simple and an uncomplicated user interface on the touch panel that is an iPad and also a dedicated wall mounted touch panel, is designed making it a delightful experience for the homeowners.

Thus, home automation can be installed into both new and existing homes, and depending on the complexity and range of the requested functionality and device interoperability can be installed in as quickly as one day. And with today's smart phone and tablet technology, homeowners should have little to no difficulty operating their smart home.

Alok Hada is the director of Anusha Technovision Pvt Ltd, New Delhi, who started his company in 2002.