

THE HOMES MAGAZINE FOR MODERN LIVING

Living etc

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INDIA EDITION



Travel diary
Ar. Kanhai Gandhi on
Fondation Louis Vuitton
by Frank Ghery

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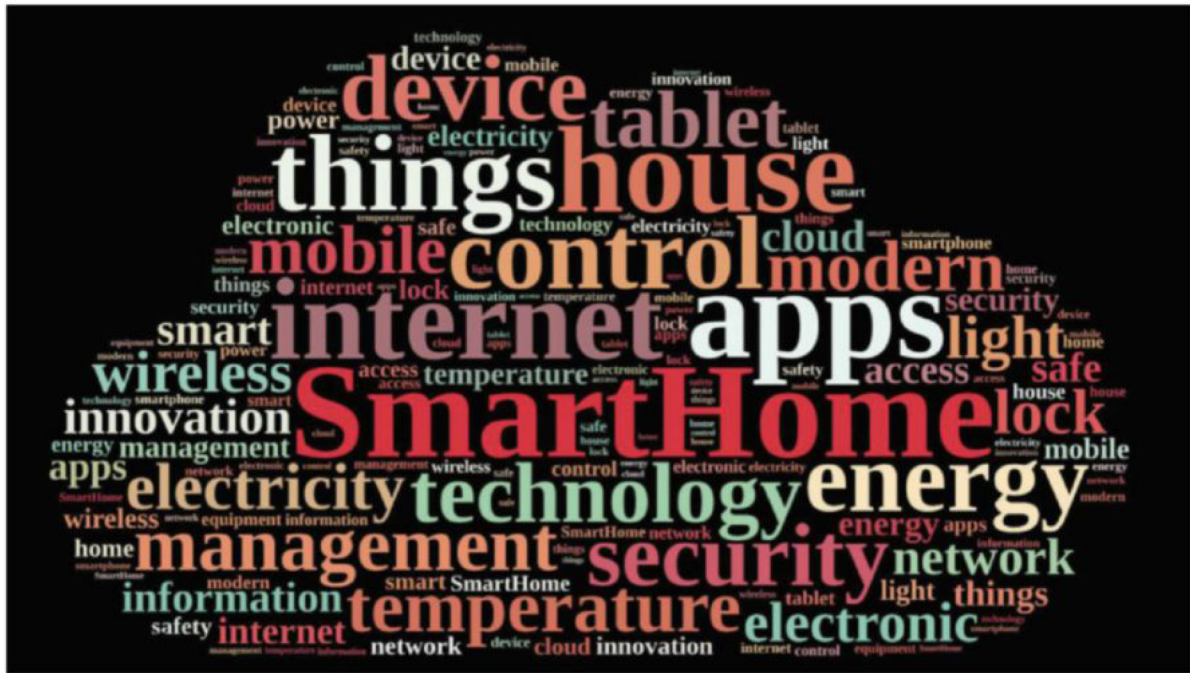
MULTI-LEVEL
PENTHOUSE
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DECORATING FOR
Christmas

BUYER'S GUIDE HOME AUTOMATION

Buyer's guide to

HOME AUTOMATION



Control every move of your home— from lights, devices and systems —with a mere touch on your smartphone...

Words / Nandini Banerjee

Why do you need a smart home? What does it actually do, besides sounding cool? Essentially, an efficient home automation system makes various home appliances more convenient and energy savers. It controls a gamut of electronic devices in the home, such as air conditioning, lights, acoustic system, security systems and appliances, among others, using wireless technology. Home automation consists of a user interface for controlling the entire system, utilising wall-mounted terminals or smart devices, such as mobile phones and computers. According to Verified Market Intelligence, the Global Home Automation System Market was valued at \$42.73 billion in 2017, and is projected to reach \$97.62 billion by 2025, growing at a CAGR of 10.9% from 2018 to 2025!

So how exactly does it make your life easier? There are showers that remember the preferred water heat and flow rates, and the exact time when to switch on. Climate-control systems adapt to your

preferred temperature and then dynamically adjust to the number of people in the space. Then there are smart light bulbs that will dim or brighten, depending on your voice-activated orders. In fact, the homes that have adopted smart technology are adding more and more connected devices every day. However, many are still sceptical of making their home fully automated. The reason: there are many articles floating in the internet that question the privacy and security of home networks and connected devices. This list includes the popular smart speakers! Also, there are those who are turned off by the complexity of installing and maintaining smart home devices. But this myth is burst by the fact that now there are many IoT devices that can turn the home smart. It does not require an elaborate in-built system!

For a new home, the automation can be in-built and done with the regular electrical wirings. For those who want to make their home smart, there are lots of easy options to retrofit an existing wiring system.



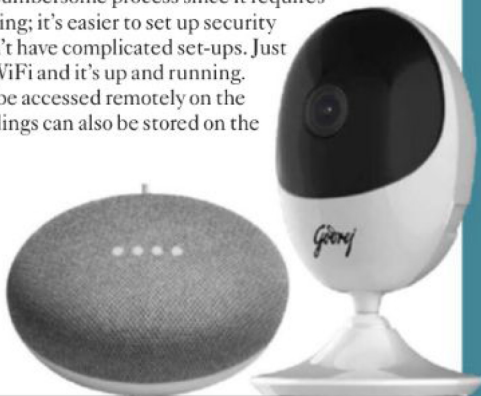
What can be retrofitted?

SMART PLUGS An IoT-enabled plug connects to an existing socket and adds a smart control functionality for a device. Any smart home appliance can be connected and then it can be remotely controlled via an app or voice commands. Syska, Anchor by Panasonic and Wipro, have such smart plugs.

CONNECTED SWITCH BOARDS A touch panel for controlling all the IoT-enabled devices, these can be retrofitted with existing wiring. Once it is set up, the connected devices can be remotely controlled via the app. Havells' SMART H switch series is a complete retrofit range which fits in the existing switch box — simply replace the manual switch with SMART H switch and it's up and ready. The range features voice control and smart app control function; and comes in an attractive modular glass finish!

HOME SECURITY CAMERAS While setting up a CCTV system can be a cumbersome process since it requires its individual wiring; it's easier to set up security cameras that don't have complicated set-ups. Just plug, configure WiFi and it's up and running. Live stream can be accessed remotely on the app, while recordings can also be stored on the memory card.

RIGHT Google Home Mini that is compatible with a variety of devices. FAR RIGHT Godrej's Ace-cube security camera that has a built-in microphone and speaker.



Anchor by Panasonic smart plugs that turn a regular socket smart.



SMART SPEAKERS A smart speaker can be the heart of your automation set-up. Popular ones are Google Home or Amazon Echo — both support compatible smart devices for voice command control. These include smart lights, fans, plugs and remotes. You can even set routines and schedules for your smart devices. Plus, get music, weather reports, news, traffic updates and shopping assistance...

THE ISSUE OF EASE-OF-USE

The growth of home automation, in the end, depends on the ability of the gadgets to become easy to operate. As Acoustics' expert Andrew John says, "Technology has to be simple to be useful. Nobody wants 20 apps on their phone to control the smart devices. In fact, smart home devices have a reputation of being difficult and cumbersome to use, and are thereby widely limited to only the obvious choices — drapes, lights and music. To make the technology mainstream, it has to be simple, integrated and affordable."

In fact, a proper automated home will, in the long run, save you money, be time-efficient, improve the well being of the home and alert you to an impending failure of a gadget or system. Amazon, Google and Apple are developing smart home hubs that unite the complicated home automated ecosystem. They have voice-activated smart speakers with personal assistants that control smart home devices.

Core devices that make a home smart!

LIGHTS It all started with the eternal groping for the light switch in the middle of the night. A smart light system helped remove that issue with a single tap! A room or even the whole house can be illuminated with the tap of a smartphone button, wireless switcher or voice command. Philips Hue White and Color Ambiance A19 60W Equivalent Smart Bulb Starter Kit is one such bulb that does it all. The kit can add up to 50 lights. You can add the Hue Dimmer Switch, Hue Tap and Hue Motion Sensor. The installation is as easy as an ordinary bulb and pairs with the Hue Bridge, which allows you to control smart-bulb-equipped lamps and overhead lights via the Philips Hue App. Also, you can control the lights with your voice using Alexa, Apple HomeKit or Google Assistant. Pair it for home automation with Nest or Samsung SmartThings system. Others to check: Wipro's WiFi Enabled Smart LED Bulb B22 9-Watt that is compatible with both Amazon Alexa and Google Assistant, and Syska's 9-Watt Smart LED Bulb, compatible with Amazon Alexa.

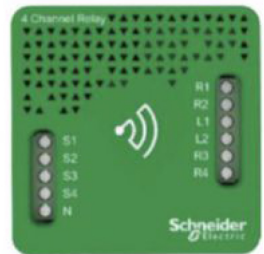
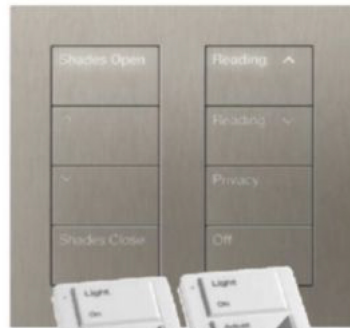
SMART THERMOSTATS With the temperature changing constantly, intuitive and precise smart thermostats are the call of the day. Utilising Wi-Fi, Bluetooth and voice assistant connectivity, a smart thermostat monitors and adapts to the home's temperature preferences, while allowing for instant adjustments. All this is controlled remotely. The third generation Learning Thermostat from Nest adapts to the home's heating and cooling preferences within a week of installation and can automatically create schedules. This thermostat features built-in Wi-Fi connectivity and can be controlled via the Nest app. It has a 2.1" display with a 480 x 480 resolution that can automatically sense when you're in the room. With Auto-Away technology, the thermostat can turn itself down when no one is home, conserving energy in the process, and can even send an alert if your home is getting too hot or cold. Another popular choice is the Honeywell Lyric T5 Wi-Fi thermostat that can be controlled via Amazon Alexa.



Havells' Enticer Smart Fan is IoT-based and comes with a retro fit module.

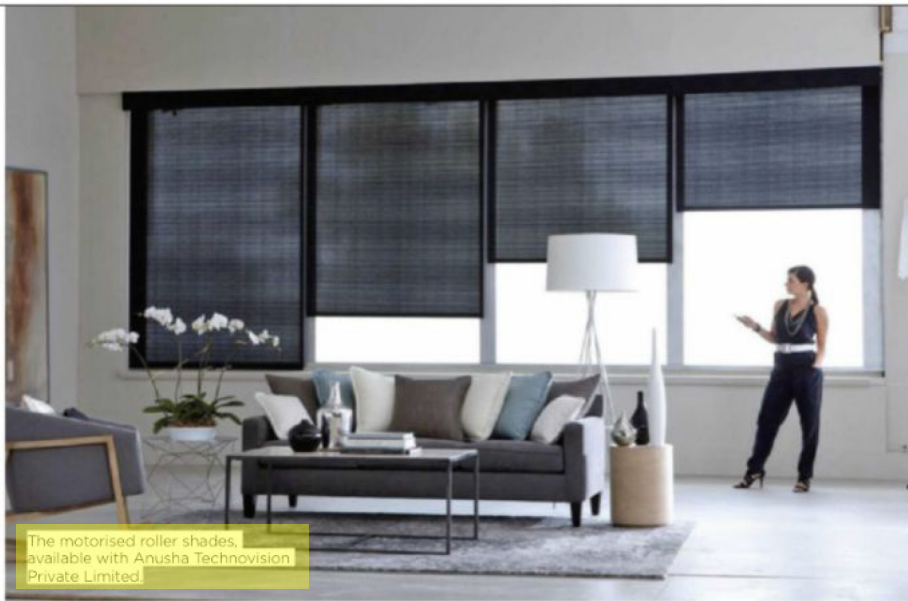


CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE
The home automation system and a smart switch board of Schneider; Orient Electric's BEE Aquator glassline storage water heater that can be operated from anywhere, anytime via Orient Smart mobile app; Dyson's Pure Hot+Cool air purifier; Learning Thermostat from Nest; Palladiom keypad and Pico Wireless remote from Lutron, available with Anusha Technovision Private Limited.



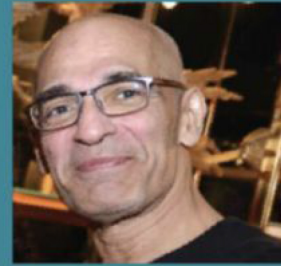
A DEVICE IS TRULY SMART WHEN IT RESPONDS TO VOICE COMMANDS AND CAN BE OPERATED REMOTELY.





The motorised roller shades, available with Anusha Technovision Private Limited.

EXPERT SPEAK:
ANDREW JOHN
on security...

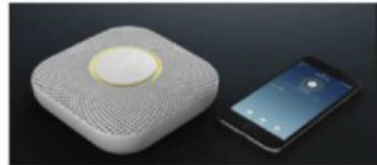


One of the arguments against a fully-automated home is that, if you can access a camera on your network, hackers can too! Andrew John agrees, "Making every system automated leaves your home more vulnerable. The devices like Alexa or Google Home cannot detect when the system has been hacked. So, when you tell Alexa to lock the front door, it might answer that the door is locked. But the truth is that it has been left open!"

He advises, "Invest in quality hardware and definitely research the systems and brands you are installing. Don't fall for the salesman's spiel. Read reviews before you make your choice. Make sure you check the credentials of the installers. Remember, one poorly engineered connected device can open a digital window to your home router and other smart home devices!"

Today, simple hacking devices can be purchased for ₹500! And these have the potential to break into routers from a short distance. Therefore, you must install a Network Intrusion Detection tool, like Firewalla, Snort and Suricata. These hardwares let you detect and block unwanted intrusions to your home networks and gadgets.

SMOKE AND CARBON DETECTORS One of the most important devices to ensure complete safety of your home, smart detectors allow the gadget to send an instant alert to the homeowner's smartphone, wherever he is. **Google Nest Protect Battery-Powered Smoke and Carbon Monoxide alarm** is one such device that has a split-spectrum sensor, which looks for both fast and slow-burning fires. Also, it speaks up if it detects smoke and tells you where it is exactly! Available at tanotis.com.



Google Nest Protect Battery-Powered Smoke and Carbon Monoxide alarm.

SMART SPRINKLERS While automatic water sprinklers are a norm these days, a smart one enables you to control the system with app and voice controls, weather sensors, auto-scheduling and watering feedback based on soil analysis. The **Rachio Smart Sprinkler Controller** adapts to the garden's needs. **It detects leaks and maximises watering precision with the Wireless Flow Meter.** It uses weather data to automatically adjust the watering schedule and save water. Available at ubuy.co.in.



Rachio Smart Sprinkler Controller that adapts to a garden's watering needs.



GRAFF's Aqua-Sense range is a shower system that defines the concept of home wellness with a true sensual experience created through the mix of water, colours and sounds. The shower touchpad allows you to control several multimedia functions, like watching videos, listening to music and changing the colours of the water, among others.



Ego is a private memory system. It is a wireless memory stick, which, just by rubbing its base onto another device transfers data, documents, photos and memories. Ego connects to its own app and doesn't require internet connection — thus, becoming unhackable! egoprivate.com