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200 years, homes were basic structures that were needed to keep rain off our heads and give our children a place to sleep, providing basic needs with minimal innovation. In 2017, things have changed: the home senses and interacts with the family to make life better. Innovations in home automation control have progressed quickly in the last two decades with the advent of the internet and increased connectivity. In fact, what was originally science fiction is now a daily piece of our life.

Now, everyone can have some version of the smarter home and there are many options to choose from when integrating technology to simplify your life. Whether balancing a hectic work schedule or relaxing with friends, the heads of the home are always for more hours in a day. Smaller and faster electronic devices attached to a wifi grid or cell service have given us more freedom in our world. A generation of paper and pens is moving to mobile talk and text and intuitive devices tell you when you need to be somewhere or remind you to take your medication. Given the current generation gap with the adaptation of new technology, this article will also show you what you can expect today and what is in the future. The following Q&A addresses a couple of the comforting benefits added with home automation and also dispel some myths.

What is a smart system that you can add, at a minimum, to your home and life?

Reynolds' team member's favorite smart feature is to integrate lighting timers and dimmers to make the home present uniformly after dark. A basic mobile app lighting control system, like Webee or Lutron Caseta, will provide more lighting control features with the ability to easily control any home lighting on a timer with scenes. Home size will limit those systems, but they are easy and affordable, within the \$1,000-\$2,000 range. Limitations in those systems' expansion exist, but they work for every who can control a basic app on their phone.

What are the basics that can improve your home life immediately, and in the future?

At a minimum, we start with updating automated sensing light switches (occupancy vacancy sensors) for bathrooms and closets that turn on as you enter to a dimmed

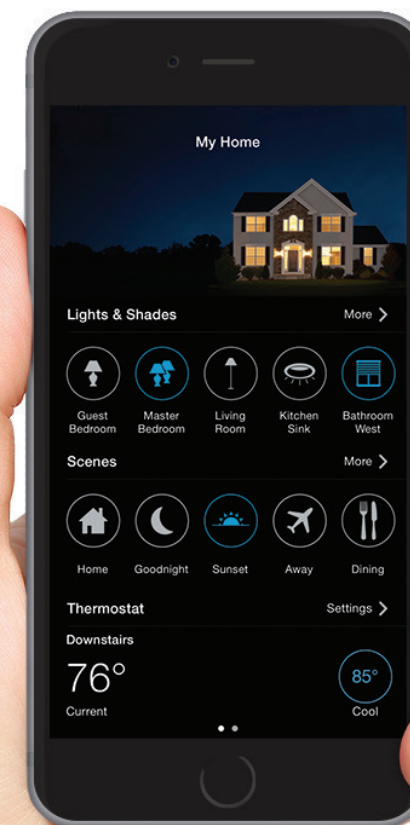
percentage and off when you leave. Get creative with their uses and the auto light sensors will be a positive impact on your life. A device that has dual-sensing with daylight sensing is the best version, but not needed for interior rooms. Lutron, Leviton, or Greengate are considered the main players in occupancy vacancy sensors.

A control specialist will develop an integration plan for your home based upon your goals for updating your home. Think about the integration of everything eventually, so that decisions about protocol are made initially. The protocol is to ensure that the devices communicate, and that should be the same for many of the devices that you want to work together. Most clients look at their control systems and don't use them frequently after installation. They are too busy for the interaction, so the more the system can operate reliably on its own, the better. A less-is-more approach will initially include remote deadbolts locks, remote access cameras, and interacting devices. Connection and interaction within the family is a good starting point to make your life easier. If you forgot turn off the lights, or if you want to see if a child is home from school, these options help save you time and stress. Ensure the control system is ready to grow with the future and your family.

What are some basic myths that can be dispelled with regards to home control and home automation?

1. Some clients think control interaction will mean "big brother" can control their home. Home lighting control with an independent system of occupancy vacancy sensors and timers is very safe. There is no connection to the internet.

2. Although safe when not connected to the internet, there is a risk with any system connected to the internet with access into cameras or appliances. Any aspect connected to a router and the internet, there is a risk through an exposed weakness in a firewall or filter. Use a professional to set-up your control system and review these risks to choose your type of system. Locate a control specialist that you trust with access to your world, as the relationship gives them access to most of your home and life when integrating certain features, such as cameras, safety, and security. Make sure your system is remotely accessible by their team and checked regularly.





3. Embrace control of what systems provide a benefit and comfort with an acceptable amount of risk. Control is not an “all or nothing” integration and a less is more approach is better.

4. Cost is another component that prevents entrance into high level systems, but as time moves on the cost is dropping in all areas of the smarter home.

Risk versus convenience—when will it be too much and what do we need?

The future of control and internet connectivity becomes a question of who is in control. The ease of any system is its ability to change and adapt without your input to improve your daily life. The remote “sensing” adjustment of home automation edges close to artificial intelligence (AI). Since an easy life with more time seems to be the goal of every family, AI or robots impacting our way of life is not that far down the road. Our cars are already driving themselves in one way or another! Likewise, for the last decade, new homes have incorporated more technological features: reliable lighting scenes with timing, auto-adjusting lights, interactive security, and whole home AV. In the next five years, systems will cost less and adjust more with less interaction. Within the next year, devices that adjust lights and music preference to family member body type and iris scan will be available. The future is limitless in terms of digital everything, from molecular cooking to robotic house cleaners—better versions of the Jetsons and Star Trek. My advice is to choose pieces that make your life better in little ways.