

# Intelligent Homes

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by Bindu Gopal Rao

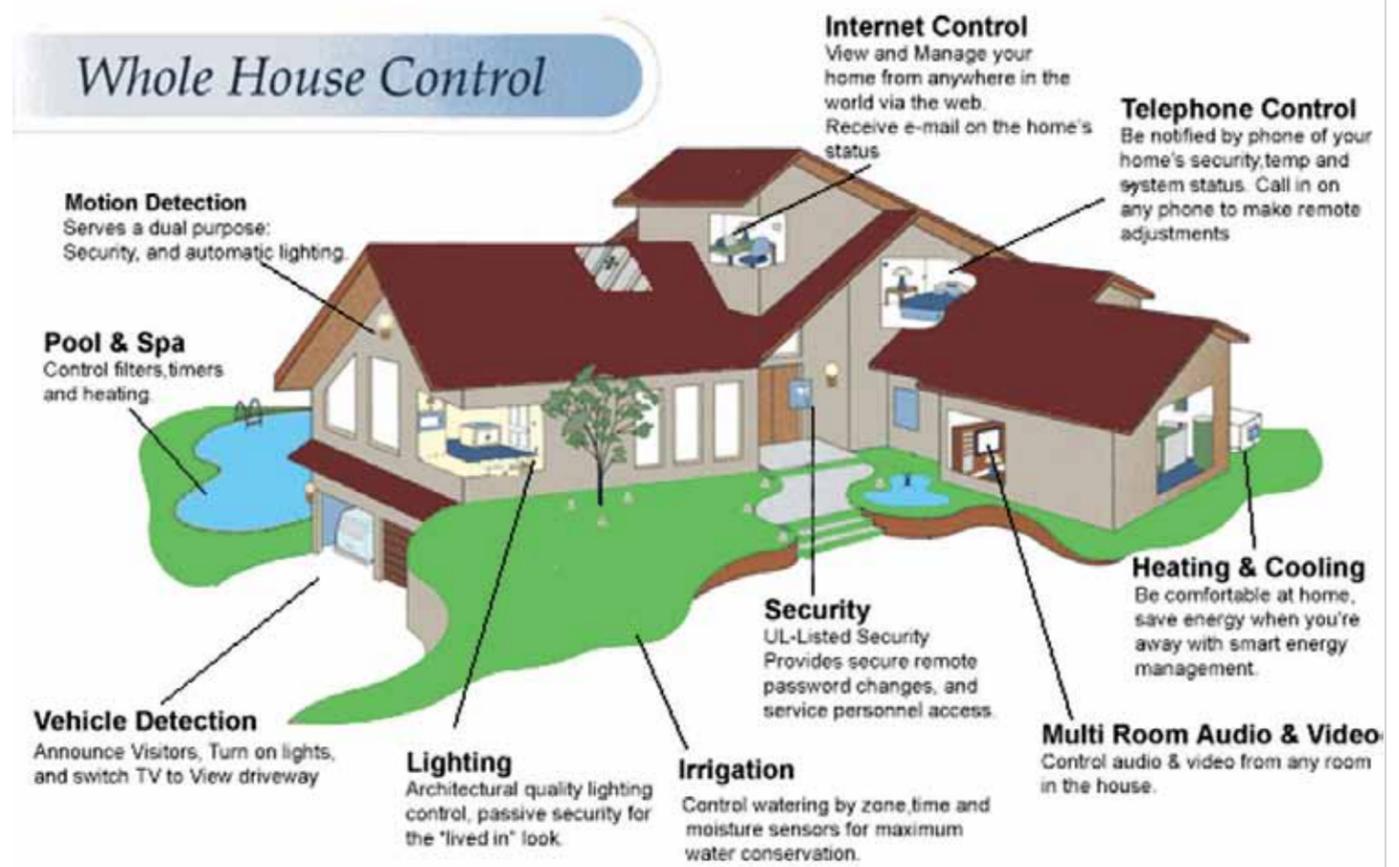
Can you imagine controlling your home with your smart phone or tablet? Well farfetched as it may sound, this is a reality with an influx of smart technologies that are invading the home space. Home automation enables people to control their housing necessities with just one click. Using your smart phone one can change AC thermostat while lying on the sofa. Doors can be unlocked using your computer at the office to let in the guest in while you are stuck at office. House lights can be scheduled on right before you get home. Technology has also enabled people to monitor home using a web based camera. Consumer electronics, electrical equipment and heating and security systems manufacturers have been developing digital technologies for domestic appliances and consumer products. *Built Expressions* speaks to industry experts on the phenomenon that is set to change homes forever.

## Tech Talk

Intelligent home technology will allow electronics and appliances to be able to communicate with each other and perform different tasks. “If you want to have something to eat but do not feel like making it, the refrigerator can suggest something based on what it has inside it. Not only that, it would communicate with the microwave to prepare the cooking power and time for that particular dish. Smart home technology can and will be used in many electronics and appliances in the near future to make life easier and more entertaining,” says Sanjeev Wadhwa, Country Head, Fisher & Paykel, India. Adds Sanjay Raj, CEO & Executive Director of Golden Gate Properties Ltd., “New technologies that have set the ball rolling are motion sensors, cameras and alarms that are controlled by smart phones for home security. Beside this entrance lock system where your door has a lock code that

can be accessed with your personal laptop. These features not only enable you to know what’s going on, but a security company can see what’s happening and alert its own response teams or the police as it sees fit. Beside security advantage smart homes enable smart automation of curtains, lighting, air conditioning, microwaves or washing machines. This facility helps you control the activities of house with just one touch.”

Technology solutions such as integrated data & voice and wireless services, Fibre to the Home, digital signage, common area IP video surveillance and energy management systems will transform every residence into a state-of-the-art home. “Mantri Developers has collaborated with CISCO to ensure the home offerings are world-class, standardized and technologically advanced. Digital lifestyle per square feet is the way forward and Smart Homes will provide greater controls on household gadgets and appliances. Smart Homes will equip the customers with many more controls that will bring enriched living experience for the residents,” says Snehal Mantri, Director Marketing, Mantri Developers Pvt. Ltd. Commercial and residential buildings account for about 38 percent of global end-user energy demand, mainly for heating, cooling and powering electric appliances. The power consumption of buildings can be reduced with energy-efficient technologies, such as intelligent controls that adjust the heating temperature, lighting and energy



consumption of electric appliances to the actual requirements. “ABB products and systems provide energy savings of between 30 and 60 percent in these areas. Today, such intelligent building systems operate independently of the power grid. In a smarter network, they will interact with the grid to give consumers greater control over the amount of electricity they use as well as when they use it,” says Sudhansu Rath, Business Head - India Sub continent, KNX-Intelligent Building Controls International Marketing & Sales Low Voltage Products Division, ABB Limited India. Adds A. S. Azharuddin, Director- Business Support, O2K Technology Services, “Some of the new technologies making way in to the homes are Gate/Door Access control, Video Door phones, Intercoms, Visitor Management, CCTV and Security systems, Lighting and Environmental controls, HD Audio / Video distribution, Home Theatre Automations. A proper, seamless integration with all these various subsystems, using a Master Control

system is making homes magically smart & intelligent.”

## New Trends

An intelligent home features electronic and technological innovations designed to control and automate its various functions. “The techniques most likely to be computerized include thermostat, gadgets, and heating and cooling; television, video and music systems; security alarm systems and tracking systems; and residential medical care watches, alarm systems and interaction gadgets. Energy suppliers that offer intelligent meters are finding they gain a advantage against your competitors. When people know more about their house power use, they change their actions and integrate energy-efficiency,” says Imran A Khan Business Head, Marketing apnagar – a division of Rudrabhishek Enterprises Pvt. Ltd. The ‘Silvan Connect’ framework allows one to add smartness to any space – be it a home, community, commercial

enterprise or hospitality. This framework provides an open platform to connect to any controlled or controlling device, work on any infrastructure and access cloud based services. “Newer systems which leverage recent advancements in pads, cloud computing, processing technology and networking are able to do that much affordable price points now. There is also a trend towards adding layers of analytics to make the home a home which learns to adapts to your moods, optimizes resources to minimize energy consumption,” says Avinash K Gautam, Vice President-Security and Automation, Silvan Innovation Labs. “Home automation systems these days come with the latest state-of-the-art technologies to provide the maximum automation solutions to the home owners. Eureka Forbes’ latest offering the iLiving Lifestyle automation solution uses Z Wave Technology. The technology is new and is being introduced in India for the first time,” says Marzin Shroff, CEO, Direct Sales & Sr.

Vice President, Marketing, Eureka Forbes.

Heating and cooling, occupancy sensors for energy savings, multi-room entertainment system as well as security and can all be integrated into a single interface, both from inside or outside the home. You can also lock and unlock doors remotely, turn on garden sprinklers and complete your day to day activities in a quicker, simpler and more efficient manner. "In addition to efficiency, integrated home security is another big advantage to the homeowner. Security as a Service (SAAS) is currently at a nascent stage but there is a definite rise in the number of customers looking at SAAS and we expect this to rise at a very rapid pace in the near future. You can check in on your home from a remote location, regardless of time and location. You can access your home alarm system remotely and get alerts if there are any unusual movements within your home," says Mehernosh Pithawalla, Assistant Vice President, Marketing, Godrej Security Solutions. The new-age customer prefers security products, mood-lighting and scenario products, and products that can be controlled through a mobile phone or remote or computer in home automation products. "A smart home networks the entire range of utility services including water, electricity, security and appliances on an automated platform that may be linked to a telephone or the Internet for the convenience of the occupant. It ensures wastage of electricity, water, and helps in creating a green planet as the customers are looking for," says Sunil Mittal, Managing Director, Addela Group.

**Customer Acceptance**

Because of the increased efficiency of utilities in an intelligent home, water, electricity and gas consumption are decreased all of which preserves natural and fossil fuel resources. A smart home should save you energy, should save you water and should also be sustainable over a long term. Basically that means it should help you save on running cost on a month on month basis. "It can be achieved if you are able to look at smart lighting options, where the set up can be installed



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for lights to be turned off in an apartment building when people are not around in the corridors or in the basement during the night. The cost of a security guard to go around turning on and then again turning off the lights is saved apart from the huge drop in electricity bills. Approximately `1 lakh is saved on the cost of manpower alone and another `2 to `6 lakhs in power savings annually, depending on the size of the building," explains Dr. Harish Narayan, Co-founder Getta, an online technology enterprise offering real estate solutions. In future, there would be more advanced technologies which will bring more comfort and leisure in our lives. Digital lifestyle per square foot is the future ahead and smart homes would provide greater controls on household gadgets and appliances. Though

many new homes are so designed, some companies retrofit old homes to make them intelligent. "The modular devices interconnected via Wi-Fi networks. You don't need to break walls or rewire. You can attach the devices into wall sockets to control lights, fans and appliances. The security devices like sensors for monitoring intruders, cameras and smoke alarms. The devices are connected to a master controller unit that allows the user control over the web and mobile devices. The devices can be customized. For example, a user can set the security camera to take a picture when someone enters a particular room of a house or office and send an email to the owners," explains Suraj Dutta Interior Designer, Siz & Associates. Take charge of your home – the smart way! . **BE**