

How do I decide what type of device to get?

There are many supported protocols for smart home functionality, and it comes down to what you need. With an impressive roster of more than 2,400 smart home devices available, it is very complicated task for the regular user to understand how it works and what exactly needed for his or her residence. The best way is to contact our company for the consultation. But explaining it simply – if you have a large home and prefer to use one application for all of your smart devices, use specifically designed system. If you have small home (townhome, apartment) – you may get away with having just voice command center like Amazon Alexa, Amazon Echo, Microsoft Cortana or Google Home.

Bluetooth wireless technology is popular in devices that will be controlled locally using a mobile app, such as door locks and lighting systems. It's more energy efficient than Wi-Fi, but its limited range means you can't control these devices remotely (out of Bluetooth range) without the use of a hub. That said, Bluetooth devices are easy to install, and like Wi-Fi, the technology can be found in nearly all mobile devices.

So what kinds of smart devices are there?

Smart Lighting – It may sound unnecessary at first, but there are a large range of benefits to having smart lighting in your home. Benefits including reduced energy use and longevity—Energy Star-certified bulbs use 70-90% less energy than traditional bulbs. They can save you the trouble of rewiring a light dimmer into the wall. A number of them include motion detection, so you can not only turn on the lights when you enter a room, but set up notifications to your phone if the motion is unexpected. If you have a smart assistant like Amazon Alexa or Google Home, you can control it through voice, or oftentimes there's Wifi/Bluetooth capability.

Smart Home Entertainment – Starting with security benefits, for one you can easily monitor (and control) the kind of entertainment present in your home. You can check your phone and see what channels your kids are watching, the websites they're visiting and the video games they're playing. You can have notifications sent to your phone in the event of a device being removed in a break-in, to track and retrieve those devices, and even disable those devices in the event they're stolen. Also, let's be honest, sometimes you just want to relax without having to get up. Assuming you have other Smart infrastructure, you're able to control the thermostat, lights and entertainment from one screen in your home.

Smart Smoke/CO2 Alarms – A good example of this technology’s benefit is the Nest Protect. Being sophisticated enough to practically eliminate false positives, it can let you know which room a fire is located in, and it can be linked to other smart devices; for example, for smart lighting to turn on your lights to help you get out safely.

Smart Thermostats – They allow you to create automatic and programmable temperature settings based on daily schedules, weather conditions, and heating/cooling needs. The features range from you controlling it by phone/voice, to detecting when you’re on your way home and optimizing so it’s the right temperature when you get there. The largest benefit is reduction in energy bills.

Smart Doorbells – There are a number of obvious and not-so-obvious benefits to this. You can use it to screen unsolicited visitors, provide accountability for deliveries, and studies are showing they are capable of reducing crime; doorbell cameras are becoming a more prevalent method of deterring possible break-ins. It’s easy to integrate with home security and insurers are starting to offer discounts to homeowners who own smart security devices.

Smart Locks – No more losing your keys; you can sync a number of these to other smart devices to turn on appliances, change the thermostat, and activate lights. There are a number of companies that are smart device-compatible, a number of Kwikset locks and all of Schlage’s smart locks are even compatible with Alexa. The features range from simply being voice-unlockable, to unlocking your door as you approach it with your smartphone.

Smart Plugs – The largest use of these is automating turning lights on for when you’re out of the house. If you don’t want to deal with cameras or other security systems, simply having lights on can be a strong deterrent to burglary. Or perhaps you’re concerned about energy use or possible electrical fires at night, and you’d like to be certain that even though a device is plugged in, that it’s definitely off. Another main use of smart plugs is curating screen time for kids. With these installed between an entertainment device and the power outlet, you can have the devices shut down based on a predetermined (and, for the best results, agreed-upon) time, using a timer. You can also track the amount of energy used by each device plugged into smart plugs, maybe to use that information to alter your personal energy use.

Smart Garage Door Controllers – These can be synced with smart locks to unlock and lock one another in tandem. A large number of them also allow for some surveillance of the inside of the garage in the event of break-ins. Most importantly though, there's no more failure of the battery-powered openers, and no more questioning whether you closed the garage door. Unconditional and constant knowledge of whether the door is closed is an undervalued peace of mind.

Security Alarm & Video System – It can control your home entry and send preprogrammed notifications to chosen recipients when someone illegally enters your property. It can be synced with garage door openers and smart locks to lock and unlock one another in tandem.