

SMARTER HOMES



Everything is automated nowadays. Our emails come to our smartphones, we can access documents through the cloud and we receive seamless internet connectivity through the air. But what about our homes?

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Purchasing an appliance is no longer just about function and energy-rating, it's also about how it can help you be more efficient. This is also true when it comes to lighting, audio-visual technology and even home security systems. It's all about ensuring simplicity and safety.

IN THE KITCHEN

Can't remember what you need while out and about? Don't worry, your fridge can tell you.

Behold, the internet fridge, designed to sense what kind of foods are being stored inside and let you know when stock is low. It keeps track of what's going in and out through barcode scanning.

With some fridges, you can connect to the internet, ordering your groceries online without ever having to leave the kitchen and some come equipped with a library of recipes to create.

SAFETY FEATURES

There are now new-age safety smoke detectors on the market that talk to your smartphone, so even when you're out of the house, you can be alerted of suspicious fire-related activity. Some, like Birdi, will also detect what kind of particles are in the air so you can be alerted if you're likely to suffer from an allergy or asthma attack. The Nest Protect tests itself automatically and lasts up to a decade. When it goes off it tells you what and where the problem is, and you can silence it using your smartphone.

When it comes to safety around the house, of course there are also alarm systems that you can control and access from your smartphone while out and about, and even locks, such as August Smart Lock, that removes the need for keys. The device simply senses that you are approaching and automatically unlocks the door for you.

POWER UP

Scared you left the heater on? There are devices that allow you to control your powerpoints, no matter where you are. Belkin WeMo Switch gives you control over your TV, lamps, kitchen appliances and other devices by using your Wi-Fi network. If you're worried or if you're going to be out and it's starting to turn dark, hop on to the app and log in to your personalised system.

IN THE GARDEN

Love to garden but can never remember when to water the plants? Technology has you covered. There are devices on the market now, such as PlantLink and Edyn Garden Sensor, that alert you when the garden needs a good shower. Some also test the humidity in the air, the temperature, how the soil is going and what moisture is around, and then give you personalised gardening advice. ••