

Welcome e-Home

The crown jewels of communication and entertainment are being hardwired into our environment. Are you ready? By Shane Inman



Admire or revile modern technology as you may, it is here to stay. Should you choose to embrace this new universal interactive age, which makes the Jetsons' futuristic

utopia look more like nonfiction than fiction, be prepared to transition your entire house from power pole to power grid.

The lineup of 21st century technological leaders – Facebook, Google, Xbox, and the biggest game changer of all, the omnipresent and omnipotent Apple, are exuberantly devising and implementing state-of-the-art communication and entertainment programs into every known electrical device under our roofs. Poised to change human civilization as we know it, here is a glimpse of what to expect as we evolve from house into e-home:

The further expansion of the smart communication tools that comprise the e-home is great news for geeks and techies everywhere, as everyone from entrepreneurs to housewives are relying more and more on these technological advances to free up precious personal time amidst their complex and demanding lives. What I'm seeing developing in the interior design world: groceries automatically ordered directly from the refrigerator, fingerprint-recognition security devices, computerized home-monitoring systems that work in tandem with smartphones (which give homeowners the ability to remotely lock and unlock doors, adjust heating and cooling, supervise alarm systems, control lights, and view the interior or exterior of their home) are just a few of the impressive computer-age innovations already downloaded into

homes across the globe. And more are on the way.

The much-anticipated second phase of the e-home's intelligent network infrastructure is a more progressive and direct two-way data system between computer and man. While Skype, iChat, Xbox, iPad, webcams, televisions and computers interface you with the outside world, the following pole stars of all electronic inventions promise to connect you even more closely with the world inside your home.

1 Gesture Control – A wave of the hand will switch television stations, adjust volume on an audio device, or even change a computer program.

2 Voice Command – Spoken words will start appliances, turn plumbing fixtures on and off, adjust heating and cooling, manipulate audio and visual components, and allow hands-free phone calls to be made anywhere inside the house.

3 Movement Sensors – Walking into a room will automatically turn lighting fixtures, music and televisions on and off and signal interior and exterior doors to open and close.

4 Immersive Communications – Superimposed reality (holograms) with graphics and sound will be the new 3D version of televisions, computer screens and Skype.

5 Physiognomy of Engagement – Facial expressions (face tracking) will be analyzed by the house's mainframe to respond to moods, with adjustments in lighting and music to enhance positive emotions.

Right about now, you may be asking yourself how you can turn your home into a digital nervous system complete with super-computer, microsecond megawatt processors, and 3D hologram imagery that will make you the envy of all your neighbors. Well, many of these power apps, such as voice command and movement sensors, are already available in our fast-

growth markets, with the help of smartphones and tablets. For others, you may have to wait until the scientific prototypes turn into viable inventions and multimedia corporations settle their battles for patents.

Whether conceptual or currently accessible, full integration of these technological instruments will involve more than just the industry standard "plug-and-play." Structured wiring (data and electrical wiring strategically installed inside walls) will need to be planned at an early stage for new construction, while a detailed schematic plan will be required for proper retrofitting during a remodel. Installation by trained audio-visual professionals working in collaboration with licensed electricians will guarantee that all devices work successfully and in harmony with each other.

Most importantly, there will be a sliding scale of price points for this modern-age software that will need to be budgeted for accordingly. How much? Well, just know this: The newer the electronic gadget, the more expensive it is. But don't lose heart; the very first calculator watch, created in the 1970s – you know, the same one you see today at the Dollar Store – cost \$750.00 when it was first produced.

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