

# Smart (Device) Choices

Choose the best  
devices and  
accessories for your  
SMART home



## What is a SMART device?

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Electronic

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Connected to additional devices  
or networks, usually through WiFi

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Communicates with additional  
devices

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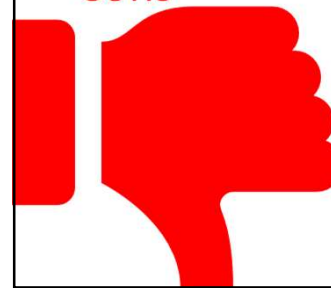
Set up to perform tasks  
automatically

## Pros




- Convenience
- Enhanced security
- Cost savings over time
- Multiple ways to perform tasks

## Cons



- Security bugs and risks
- Password maintenance
- Cost
- Learning Curve



What you need...

- Power!
- Reliable Internet
- WiFi Router
- Mesh Router (for larger homes)



## Setup Steps


1. Determine Your Needs

**WHAT DO YOU WANT TO DO?**

- Listen to music
- Save money on your bills
- Protect your home

**PRIORITIZE:**

- Must Haves
- Semi-Important
- Wishlist




## Setup Steps

2. Set a budget & timeline

**CONSIDER THE "EXPERTISE" FACTOR**  
Is this a DIY project or will you need to hire someone?

**START GRADUALLY**  
You can build up your collection of smart devices over time.

**MOVING SOON?**  
Some devices will stay with the home



## Setup Steps

3. Choose your devices

**EXISTING ECOSYSTEM**  
iPhone or Android? You may find it easier to stick with devices that work with what you already own.

**APP CENTRAL**  
Most smart devices come with Apps, but many are compatible with Alexa, Siri or Google.

**DON'T HAVE A SMARTPHONE?**  
Your options are more limited, but you can still use some devices!

## Setup Steps

### 4. Getting things up and running

Download the device app

Turn on the new smart device and link it to the app

If using a hub, open that app and add the new device.

## Security Checklist

- Use **Strong Passwords** for your Router, Firewall, and WiFi
- Don't Use Default Passwords!
- Install updates to software and firmware
- Considering setting up Guest WiFi (to keep your passwords safe)
- Know which apps will send you notifications
- Be wary of unusual or suspicious notifications, links, and texts

## Devices: Speakers

- Listen for voice commands
- AI assistant does the work for you
- Play **music**
- Access to **News** and **Radio Stations**
- Check the **Weather**
- Can be set up as an **intercom**
- **Alexa Emergency Assist (\$6/month)**
  - Calls emergency services



## Devices: Speakers - Platforms

### Amazon

- Assistant: **Alexa**
- Supports ~140,000 smart devices
- Setup is mostly painless, but...
- App can be frustrating
- Suggests products based on your activities
- Largest music selection

### Google Home

- Assistant: **Google**, or **"Hey Google"**
- Most reliable answers
- Integrates well with Google Calendar
- Currently transitioning to Gemini (AI)
- Not super friendly with Amazon

### Apple Home

- Assistant: **Siri**
- Most privacy-friendly
- Most intuitive app
- Only compatible with ~1000 devices
- Works best with Apple Music





**Amazon Echo **SPOT****

- ~\$80
- ½ display ½ speaker
- No camera


<https://a.co/d/cBKFGka>



**Amazon Echo **DOT**  
(5<sup>th</sup> Gen)**

- ~\$50
- Round, with multi-directional speaker
- Better for larger spaces (fills the space better)
- Built in temperature sensor

<https://a.co/d/aqGhSxN>

**Amazon Echo **POP****

- ~\$40
- Speaker Only (no display)
  - Larger speaker than Dot
  - Front face speaker
- No camera
- Great for smaller spaces
- No temperature sensor

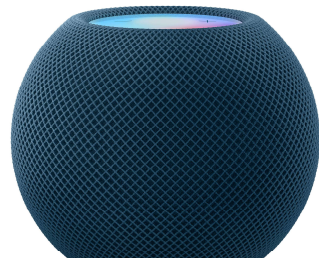
<https://a.co/d/0t67Xqi>



**Google Assistant:  
**NEST MINI****

- ~\$40-50
- Same basic features as Amazon devices
- Part of the Google ecosystem

<https://a.co/d/7guRfdT>



<https://www.apple.com/homepod-mini/>

## Apple HOMEPOD MINI

- **\$99**
- Only works with Apple platform (HomeKit)
  - Siri and iPhone
- Voice Command
- Buy two to create stereo sound

## Devices: Display

- Similar to other speakers, but with **touch screen** capability
- Usually include a **camera**
- **Voice** command
- Set **timers** in the kitchen
- Add **To Do List** or **Grocery List**
- Set **Reminders** (e.g. medications)
- Ask to **read instructions**
- Act as a **Hub** to control multiple smart devices



<https://a.co/d/aaNnHEW>

## Amazon ECHO SHOW (3<sup>rd</sup> Gen)

- **~\$90-\$400**
- Echo Show: 5, 8, 10, 15 & 21 (refers to display sizes)
- Great for cooking!
- Some models include "Show and Tell" Feature

## Google NEST HUB MAX



<https://a.co/d/fwhSn0B>

- **~\$100 - \$200**
- 7 or 10 inches

## Devices: Lighting & Power



## Light Bulbs

- Features **App** and **Voice Control**
- Dimming and color options
- Adjustable colors helps with light pollution (and saves moths!)
- Last longer, saves money in the long run



## Light Bulbs: Things to Consider

- **Compatibility:** many base and bulb sizes. May not be suitable for outside, or enclosed spaces
- **Color temperature:** change from warm to cool lights
- **Lumens:** bulb brightness
- **Connectivity**
  - ✓ Check WiFi compatibility
  - ✓ Mesh WiFi or Zigbee wireless provide better range than regular Wifi

**Watts and Lumens**  
 40 watts: 450 lumens  
 60 watts: 800 lumens  
 75 watts: 1100 lumens  
 100 watts: 1600 lumens

## Light Bulbs: examples



HOW TO

## Set up your Amazon Basics Smart Bulb with Alexa



## Light Switches and Outlets

- Requires **tools** and comfort with **electricity**. May need to consider hiring help.
- Older homes may not have **neutral wire**. Choose switch that doesn't require one.
- **Measure first**
- Can't use light switch AND smart bulbs. Choose one or the other.



## Light Switches and Outlets: examples



Kasa Apple HomeKit Smart Dimmer Switch KS220  
\$28  
<https://a.co/d/eYxhaGw>



Felt Electric Smart Dimmer Switch  
(neutral wire required)  
\$19  
<https://a.co/d/4YtK2Zq>

## Interior Motion Sensors

- Small and unobtrusive
- Detects motion or condition changes inside your residence
- Can be paired with other devices, such as lights

### Things to Consider

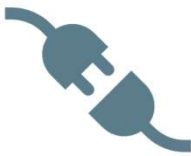
- Most of these devices require a hub
- Battery life ranges from a few months to over a year.
- Range varies





## Plugs and Surge Protectors

- Allows control of anything plugged into the device (holiday lights, space heaters, lamps, etc.)
- Stops extra power draws
- **Compatibility:** They might not talk to each other.
- Area specific (outdoor vs indoor)
- Most plugs are rated for **15 amps** of current
- **Extras:** energy monitoring, sunrise/sunset schedules, away mode



## Surge Protectors and Plugs: examples

TP-Link Tapo Matter Outdoor Smart Plug, 2 Individual outlets  
\$20  
<https://a.co/d/7RkPNnw>

Kasa Smart Plug Power Strip HS300, Surge Protector with 6 Individually Controlled Smart Outlets and 3 USB Ports \$80  
<https://a.co/d/dWpbtfW>

Kasa Smart Plug Mini 15A \$42  
<https://a.co/d/8h0d50S>

## TVs & Streaming

- Smart TVs can connect to the Internet
- Some models have a voice command function to turn on/off
  - Samsung (Bixby)
  - LG (ThinQ AI)
  - Android TV (Alexa)
  - Google TV (Google Assistant)



## TVs & Streaming

External Devices include

- Roku
- Apple TV
- Amazon Fire TV (Stick or Cube)
- Google TV Streamer
- Xbox Series X|S







### Security Cameras

- Motion activated
- Alerts/notifications sent to your phone
- Differentiate between people, animals, vehicles, etc.

#### Things to Consider

- Professional monitoring
- Storage for recordings: Free or Paid?
- Add-on accessories (carbon monoxide sensors, water, smoke, extreme temp)
- Permits required? Maybe when connected to emergency services



**Ring Alarm Pro**  
Whole-home security with built-in eero Wi-Fi 6 router

- **\$380 (base system)**
- Ring Home Plan (Basic, Standard or Premium) +\$5-10/month
- Monitoring +\$20/month
- Built-in WiFi Router

<https://a.co/d/6TIGP37>

**Arlo Pro 5S 2K SPOTLIGHT CAMERA**

- **\$180**
- Cord free (battery operated)
- Auto zoom and tracking
- Subscription (Arlo Secure)
  - Camera support
  - Recording capability
  - Cameras distinguish between people, animals, package deliveries, etc.

<https://a.co/d/g77Cb2x>

## Garage Door Opener

- Allow **deliveries to your garage** (requires *Key* from Amazon Prime)
- Open and close garage without physical opener
- Send a one-time code to friends and neighbors

Genie ALKT1-R Smart Garage Door Opener



<https://a.co/d/8AJRnc5>

## Doorbell

- See who's there, even if you're not home
- Guards against break-ins and “porch pirates”
- Things to consider
  - Storage: memory card or cloud storage
  - Power: battery operated or wired
  - Motion detection distance
  - Ability to distinguish motion



## Doorbell: examples



eufy Security, Video Doorbell S220 Kit

\$175

<https://a.co/d/2ijuZWY>



Google Nest Doorbell

\$140 (battery) – \$180 (wired)

<https://a.co/d/eE6ZRM>

## Door Lock

- Uses voice, keypad, fingerprint or app to **unlock the door**
- Monitor who is entering the house while you're away
- Give **access** to visitors
- **Battery operated**, so works even when the power is out

Schlage Encode Smart Wi-Fi Deadbolt



<https://a.co/d/7dcr7YI>



## Devices: Utilities

ThePhoto by PhotoAuthor is licensed under CCYSA.

### Thermostat

- Maximize **efficiency** and trim utility **bills**
- Good for owners of rentals or vacation homes
- Some include **remote sensor** and/or **air quality monitors**
- Some **learn your habits** and can detect a person's presence in a room



### Thermostat: **examples**



Google Nest Learning Thermostat (4<sup>th</sup> Gen)  
\$280  
<https://a.co/d/7lyvolQ>



ecobee New Smart Thermostat Premium with Smart Sensor and Air Quality Monitor  
\$250  
<https://a.co/d/61o8HIS>


### Water Leak Sensor


Detects leaks  
Includes temperature and humidity tracking

#### Things to Consider


- How does it work? Where is the sensor, the bottom or the top
- Is there an **audible alarm**, or just an **alert** on the app
- Integrate with **existing platforms**



 **Water Leak Sensor: examples**



Kidde WiFi Water Leak Detector & Freeze Alarm  
\$28  
<https://a.co/d/2aeHsXj>




Moen 900-001 Flo Smart Water Monitor and Automatic Shutoff Sensor  
\$600  
<https://a.co/d/2sgZVB4>

**Smoke Detector**

Things to consider:

- Integration with other devices
- Lifespan
- Silencing capabilities?
- Battery check



 **Smoke Detector: examples**



First Alert Smart Smoke & Carbon Monoxide Alarm  
\$129  
<https://www.firstalert.com/us/en/products/alarms/smart-smoke-carbon-monoxide-alarms/>



Kidde Smart Smoke Detector & Indoor Air Quality Monitor  
\$55  
<https://a.co/d/dc7Utl3>

**Devices: Appliances**



**Washer/Dryer**  
<https://a.co/d/dqYbA80>



**Vacuum**  
<https://a.co/d/bU5t9lp>



**Air Fryer/Convection Oven**  
<https://a.co/d/i6BzPNv>



**Induction Cooking Countertop**  
<https://www.invisacook.com/>



**Refrigerator**  
<https://a.co/d/87MxURo>



**Coffee Maker**  
<https://a.co/d/dkEjH1r>

## Devices: Extras

### Hose Timers

- Most use your existing setup, but adapters are available if needed
- Strong Wi-Fi signal required
- Wi-Fi hub accesses weather forecasts



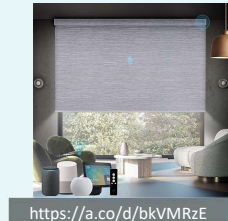
Rachio Smart Hose Timer  
<https://a.co/d/elZEUCt>

Orbit Smart Hose Watering Timer  
<https://a.co/d/4jJf2gY>

## Devices: Extras

### Window Shades and Blinds

- Open/shut on a schedule or when light is detected



<https://a.co/d/bkVMRzE>



<https://a.co/d/cbdsVlw>

## Devices: Extras

### Bird Feeder

- Bird species recognition
- Name your birds
- Spot a sick bird
- Pet alert



<https://a.co/d/eUlxkza>

## Devices: Extras

### Lawn Mower

- Maps property
- Identifies obstacles
- Set schedules and mowing heights



<https://a.co/d/4ltRwo2>

## Devices: Extras

### Pet Camera

- Real time motion alerts
- Night vision
- Speaker and microphone
- Treat tossing



<https://a.co/d/2l1Unmb>

**Thank you for attending!**

Questions? Contact us at  
[techclasses@wheatonlibrary.org](mailto:techclasses@wheatonlibrary.org)

## Additional Resources

- Wirecutter
- Consumer Reports (available from the library)
- PCMagazine
- Take a look at user reviews too.