

Are You Tired of Looking at That Dingy House of Yours? My eBook 101 How To Renovate the Transformation and Update Your Current Home to Fully Automated that Will Bring a Smile to Your Face..



by Terry D. Clark

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Table Of Contents

Introduction

Chapter 1: What Is Home Automation

Chapter 2: The Benefits Of Home Automation

Chapter 3: What Will You Take Control Of

Chapter 4: Methods Of Home Automation Control

Chapter 5: Just What Is X10 Technology

Chapter 6: Building An Automated Home

Tips For When Automation Doesn't Go As Planned

Conclusion

Introduction

The home of the future can be the home you live in today. As you were growing up, you probably remember cartoons, movies and television that forecasted a home that would make your food, walk your dog, and instantly greet you when you came home.

While we haven't gotten quite to that point, home automation has taken the home into a new dimension. Today, you can control virtually anything in your home with

a remote or even voice recognition.

You may think that this is too hard to do or that it's too technologically advanced for you. There's nothing to worry about because home automation has become easy and affordable. In most cases, you can make significant changes for under \$100.

Are you ready to step into a world that offers you the ability to take control? Home Automation 101 will prepare you to do just that. Learn what your options are, the different methods of control and just how to get these benefits into your home today. Yes, today!

Chapter 1: What Is Home Automation?

As a very basic definition of home automation you could consider it to be anything that is able to be controlled in your home. If you have a remote or you have automatic control over the function within your home, you have home automation.

Today's standards are high. There are actually a number of different ways that you can install this type of automation into your home, which you will see in later chapters. What's important to know is that most of the automation that you will do will not require hard work. It won't require tearing apart your home or spending thousands of dollars on a simple system.

Home automation is something that the average person can do. Most of the products that you will find are simple to install and they don't have to be more than a few hours worth of a project.

What you need to know now, though, is what's available to you, why you should be considering this, how to get started and where and what to purchase to make it happen.

First, determine your needs, wants, and budget. It's important for you to take into consideration the vast number of tools that you have at your hands. Depending on what your goals are, you could transform your home into something truly amazing.

Understanding Automation

Home automation can allow you, and your computer, to make the things that you need and do in your home easier to accomplish. Perhaps you want to control your security system? Or, perhaps you want to voice automate the lights in your home so that you can get into bed and then turn the lights out. Or, perhaps you want to be able to control your sound system from anyplace in your home.

No matter what it is you are looking to accomplish, home automation products are probably available to help you to make it happen.

The technology that you need to make this happen is quite accessible to most individuals. One way to purchase it is through kits that are already designed to include everything you need to set up the home automation and to get it running.

This will include the hardware and software you need from things like timers to the wireless devices you'll need.

You can and you should consider the purchase of these kits. They aren't your only option though. You can do all of the hardware work yourself and simply purchase the software to set it up. You can configure your own system completely using the tools that are available on the market.

But, when you take advantage of the automation kits, you are likely to get a more affordable price and it's just simpler to make happen. Since most kits can conform to your specific needs, there's little to worry about. Of course, there are several options available for each individual, which allows you to select what's right for you and your home.

A Quick Look At Options

Home automation tools can truly range the gamut. Some of the leaders in this technology offer choices so that you as the homeowner can select the pieces that make the most sense for your needs. Packages are available for:

- Simple remote control units that work no differently than your television remote.
- Motion sensors that work with security systems to detect movement.
- Video surveillance equipment that allows you to monitor virtually anything you want to.
- Thermostat controls to allow you to control how warm or cold you want it.

How Do These Kits Work?

Most of the home automation kits will work in a similar fashion. While some of the latest technology takes you farther, most installing home automation features for the first time should consider what the kits have to provide to you. But, first, let's take a quick look at the technology that is involved in making these home automation kits work for you.

The two main types of automation technologies used currently including X10 and remote control units.

X10: Your Communication Tool

X10 is a communications protocol. It allows your appliances to talk to each other, which means that they can communicate your needs between each other. They do this by using the standard electrical lines you have in your home. X10, which is named after the company that created it is a technology that has the most talking. Although it was designed some twenty years ago, today's packages are more likely to please you.

Take into consideration, for example, the X10's ActiveHome Pro, which is a home automation system that is one of the very best selling on the market today. What makes it even more amazing is that its about \$100. That's it!

If you look into this product, you'll likely get all that you need. Here's what comes with the purchase, at the time of this writing:

- Adapters, or sometimes they are called modules. One of these adapters will be a transceiver. These modules simply plug right into your wall's outlet. Depending on which appliance you want to automate, that's the outlet you would use for the module. There are different modules for the various types of appliances that you have. For example, you may get one that works for your lighting.
- You may also get a key chain style of a remote to use regularly.
- A PalmPad remote control to control the appliances as you see fit.
- A motion sensor which can help you to really automate your home's function.

The process is very simple, actually. As with this example, you simply will use the modules to turn your appliances on and off. The modules that work with lighting also have the ability to dim as per your control. You'll be able to do all of this by using the downloadable software that you'll get from the company's website.

But, don't worry; you don't have to have your computer running all of the time. In fact, you only need it to install the software and then to adjust your settings as time goes on and you want to make changes. To use the automation devices, you'll use your two remotes, the PalmPad and the key chain device.

It's that easy?

Really, it is. To get started, you'll need to purchase the automation tools that you want to use. Then, download the software that's required to use them. This is simple too, and doesn't usually take much time or space. Once you get it on your screen, you will then be able to assign each of your appliances to the module.

To do this, you simply label the icons that appear in the software to the appliances that you have in the home. You'll

keep them organized, too. Just click and drag them into the room on the screen that they are located in. Its easy to do and keeps each item completely organized.

Now, when you get the modules installed, you'll simply plug them into the outlets that your appliances plug into. These modules allow the computer software to communicate with the appliance through an interface unit.

This unit generally connects to your computer through a USB cable. The unit gets information from your actions on the computer.

From there, it tells the appliance what to do through the electrical wires in your home. The final set will be testing the remotes to insure that they are working correctly, which generally speaking will be. As simple as this sounds, it does become a whole lot of fun, too!

You're Not Limited!

You may be curious about those appliances that don't have an outlet plug. Take for example, the ceiling fan in your bedroom. Don't worry, its easy to automate this, too. In this case, you will simply remove the light bulb, insert the appropriate module into the ceiling fan's light bulb socket and then screw the light bulb into the module.

This makes it easy to use automation specifically that of X10 anywhere you want to.

It Gets Better, Though

Now, just this type of automation would be okay, but once you get it installed, you'll want to play with the Macros it offers too. Macros are a series of commands

that are linked. With the use of macros, you can make one button on your remote do several things, in a series of actions. The best part is that you design how it works and what you want it to do.

There are several ways that this technology can work for you. For example, you can set up your outdoor lighting with the use of macros. You could program it to follow a specific set of instructions. It may turn on your outdoor lights when the sun goes down and then an hour later can dim them.

It would finally turn off at the time you set. But, you can configure into this mix the ability to turn back on if the lights detect any motion in their range, creating safety and security.

Or, you can use macros to help you to set up a series of function within the home. Let's say you are coming in the door and want to relax. By setting up macros to turn on the lights to the appropriate level, to turn on your favorite cd and even to get the bathtub running, you could easily enjoy that.

Not only is it fun to do these types of things but it just makes life easier for you. With this type of technology, home automation allows you to make the most out of what life has to offer to you.

Now, remember that X10's home automation system that we are using as an example here isn't your only choice. There are other companies and products that are available.

But, you can clearly see just how simple it can be to set up and take full advantage of a home automation system. While some of these systems do have a few quirks to them, you are never going to reach for that toggle switch to turn off the lights again!

Today's automation for the home can be done in numerous ways. What you are going to learn in the next chapters includes your options and the vast number of benefits that come from automating your home.

While you may be a couch potato that is looking for a way to just make life simpler, you may also have other needs to address, too. Home automation has been credited with helping countless individuals make life livable by helping to reduce

stress, increase the amount of movement they can do and it can save you time.

As with the X10 system we talked about, you'll find that most of the home automation that you are able to do is quite affordable to do. Just take a look at the options that you have. Consider what works best for you and then implement it.

It's important to realize that home automation also allows you to make life fit you a bit better. But, don't think that there is just one product on the market to serve the need that you have. You'll find many to choose from. Since home automation is a large and growing field, there are many brands, styles and various technologies at play. You are likely to find yourself comparing models to determine which offers what you are looking for in the best possible manner.

This makes home automation that much more enjoyable and beneficial, too.

Now, that you know the basics about this system, consider how it will enhance your life.

Chapter 2: The Benefits Of Home Automation

Now that you are dazzled by all of the possibilities of what can happen with home automation, you may be wondering, why should you do this in the first place?

The benefits of home automation expand well beyond the fun factor. Of course, you could make a case for this being the way of the future too. But, realistically speaking, there are key reasons why you need to make the decision to install these systems into your home.

You may have your own benefits and desires when it comes to home automation, too. For each person, the experience is their own.

Let's break down some of the obvious benefits that automation offers to you.

It's Convenient

The reason that many of the home automation products have been developed is that of convenience. People love being lazy, and in short, that's just fine when it comes to automation options.

Do you remember when you were younger not having a remote control for the television. Yes, there was a time when you actually did have to get up to turn the channels. As difficult as that was, the television remote was one of the first automation tools and by far one of the most used automation tools today.

Convenience with home automation goes farther than this, though. You'll gain the ability to do more, faster and easier.

For example, you can heat your home, run a bath, dim the lights, warm your bed before you make it up the stairs and so much more. A popular choice is that of the bathroom and shower models which will actually get your bathroom heater and shower running five minutes before your alarm clock goes off to wake you up. Yes, no more cold showers and cold bathroom floors!

Convenience is the reason most people do turn to home automation and even why some businesses are using it for their needs, too. What things do you do daily that you would love to avoid? What short cuts would make your life a bit better, even if just minimally?

More than likely, there is a way to make that situation better with the use of home automation.

Safety

Although convenience may be why you are considering using home automation, there is likely to be some safety benefits available to you as well. Depending on the types of products that you purchase, you can secure your home, with or without the

help of an alarm system.

Consider the options. To help protect your home from predators, you can secure motion detecting lights to surround your home. Not only will they turn on when they detect any type of movement in an area where there shouldn't be, but they can alert you to this, too.

You can set it up to alert you with an email to your work account or you can have an automated recording call you to alert you.

If you work nights or don't like coming home to a dark house, you can configure your lighting system to turn on as you are approaching. Even from down the street, your home is well light, comfortable and there's no way anything is lurking in the shadows without your knowledge of it.

Safety is important inside the home as well. If there is something that's gone wrong and there's water in the basement, an alert can be sent to you. Or, if the temperature of the home falls to a certain level, that too can be alerted to you.

Home automation really puts you in charge of your home's safety. Without much cost and much trouble, you can set up your home to be safe from the moment you get up to the moment you fall asleep and beyond.

Set up alerts to contact the police if there's a glass break. Set off warnings that will alert you, the police, the neighbors and even the other appliances in the home of a fire.

Not only do you want the home automation tool to alert you of the problem, but you want it to take it one step farther too. You want it to detect motion, turn on the lights, alert you by email, and even contact the police if the home is violated.

This system of movements is not something that can easily be done without a high end security system that is monitoring your home day in and day out, which comes at a very costly price.

But, home automation elements like this are rather affordable and they can be easily installed in just a few hours. Your home can be safe for you and the people

you love in minutes. That is a worthwhile benefit and definitely a reason for you to begin implementing this technology into your home.

Money Savings

Believe it or not, home automation can save you money as well. There are several ways that it can, actually. For example, by fine tuning the way that your appliances work, you can get the most benefit from them, but you also get the benefit of using them only when you need to.

Why should your home be heated to a perfect 72 degrees F when you aren't home to enjoy it? That's wasted energy. You can use home automation to help with this by programming it to turn on the heat or air conditioning a half hour before you get home.

Don't stop there, either. With the same programming tools you can get your hot water heating for your shower in the morning. Preheat the oven for dinner (you've already gotten it together in the refrigerator.)

By programming your home automation system to do the things that you want to only when you need to use them, you can save yourself countless dollars along the way. Your electric bills, gas bills and other costs can be considerably lowered when you harness the ability of automation to use programming benefits. Where are you wasting money without using it?

What's more is that adding automation to your home is an excellent way to increase the value of your home should you ever decide that it's time to sell it.

It's Just Fun, Too

There is no doubt that the techie in you wants to play with these tools. It is fun to use them when others are around too. You look like you have had your home designed around these needs, which is no small cost, of course. Impress your guests or just enjoy using them yourself.

Imagine their surprise to hear you tell the voice recognition system to turn on the music program that you've put together. Or, you may be able to impress them with dimming the lights with a remote control followed by the television turning on to play the movie that everyone has come to watch.

Yes, there is no doubt that one of the benefits of tapping into home automation comes from the ability to have some fun with it. You don't have to have anyone near you to feel the satisfaction that comes from using these units.

There are many ways that you can program your home automation system to work for you, in your way. If you are concerned about the options you have, just consider the various types of automation that are already at your fingertips.

In later chapters, we'll get into the ways that you really can dress up your home with home automation.

As you can see, there are benefits to using a home automation program in your home. Although you thought this was something that was in the distant future, and although you thought it was too costly to do this, you may have been mistaken.

Home automation is here to stay. Use it to make your life more convenient. Use it to make your life enjoyable. Use it to increase the value of your home should you ever decide to sell it. Still, there's much more to realize with the use of these tools.

In the coming chapters you'll see a number of different ways that you can add some automation to your life. Just try to stop yourself from enjoying all that it has to offer to you.

Really, there is no reason not to consider investing in this type of automation. Now, are you ready to learn about your options?

Chapter 2: What Will You Take Control Of?

The options are endless. Home automation is easy to benefit from for a wealth of reasons, as you've seen, but what you may not realize is that there are plenty of choices for you to take advantage of.

What things in your home would you like to automate? There are plenty of decisions to make, and what will surprise you is just how affordable it can be to use each one of these.

In this chapter, we'll take a look at some of the options that you have in home automation. Later, we'll look into some of the most popular choices a bit more in depth so that you can see just how easy it can be to install them into your home.

Here's an overview of some of the options that you can consider in home automation for your home. Remember that each company offers their one unique take on them, but that the overall function is basically the same.

Security Systems

Security today is one of the most important reasons to consider home automation. Your options are limited otherwise. You could purchase a system that will make a lot of noise if someone was to break in or violate it.

Or, you could spend a small fortune (maybe even a big fortune) on having a home monitoring service that will alert you directly when someone violates the home.

With home automation, you get the best of both worlds. You can easily invest in a security system that will monitor your home just like others do, even better most of the time that will also be programmed to alert you when something violates it.

For virtually a one time fee of purchasing the automation kit, you'll be able to secure your home indefinitely with the most up to date technology. Here's what could happen.

- You set your home's automation system to use motion sensors, home security on windows and doors and even noise protection.

- When something is violated, like a door's glass is broken or it detects movement where there shouldn't be any, the alarm sounds.
- You get an email or a call at work or on your cell that alerts you to the possible threat.
- You can even program the system to contact the local police department to check out the home.

It did all of that and did it all without any cost. Your home can be protected from burglary or predators that could be lurking near your family.

You can also use these systems to provide protection in the way of fire, hazards and even to alert you when there is a problem such as water in your basement.

Depending on what you allow it to provide you; you can know what's happening in your home no matter where you are, no matter what's happening there.

In fact, as an added bonus, you can even set up these security systems to provide you with the ability to let someone into your home when you aren't home.

Let's say that your child forgets his code or keys to be let into the home after school. With a contact from you to the security system, you can allow them to gain access to the home as they need to. This can only happen when you okay it to do so, though.

Security is an option that you have. These kits usually provide you with countless options. Depending on the cost, the needs and the available tools to you, you can safely set up your home to deliver for your needs.

Lighting

Yet another popular choice in home automation has to do with lighting. In fact, in many companies this is the most popular of all the products they offer.

Lighting is also one of the most inexpensive of products to choose from. Investing in these will cost as little as just \$20 which will allow you to dim the lights in your

home even if you haven't ever been able to do that before.

Lighting home automation tools will allow you to control the amount of light, when the lights come on, go off and allow you to set up a vast number of wonderful lighted displays that you design.

Lighting automation allows for several benefits that are unique. For one, there are benefits in saving energy. You can program lights to dim gradually over several hours, or you can plan on the lights going on or off at a set time.

Lights can be shut off from any location within the home one by one or you can have a master switch which allows you to turn off all lights in the home (or those that you adjust) at one time. Going to bed at night, all the lights can be turned off.

Leaving the home, all lights can be turned off. Better yet, think you hear something downstairs in the middle of the night, turn all the lights in the house on at once.

Lighting automation can be done with the help of a remote control or you can use modules that simply screw into the lighting fixture, which makes any lighting fixture turn into a dimming unit. Or, you can purchase a more advanced lighting option such as those that work with voice recognition.

Although you may think that it will take rewiring the whole home to make that happen, that's not the case. Instead, you will just use modules as we've described in the beginning to do all the work for you, requiring little if any type of rewiring.

Indeed, this helps to cut down the price of these units greatly. Anyone can afford some of these models that cost a mere ten to twenty dollars.

Lighting automation also will include options such as remote control blinds, lighting fixtures around the house and for those that are looking for the most advanced technologies, voice recognition.

While most units don't require it, those that need a hardwired product will find that these are readily available.

Some of the most popular brands for lighting automation include Isteon, UPB, X10, and Zwave.

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