

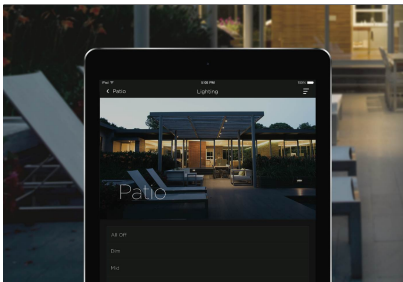
# The Future is Now: Home Automation

Written by Tom Monte and Dave Green

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**Home automation for everyone is here. Tune in.**



*Control lighting without leaving your comfy chair*

We're Baby Boomers and remember when the most you could adjust in your home were the knobs on the radio and television, if you had one. Today, homes are almost alive, and futurist visions are becoming reality. Technology changes our lives by the moment.

At home, we can change the television channel with our iPhones and iPads, play music from dozens of Internet streaming services such as Pandora, iHeart Radio, XM/Sirius, and so many more. It's music to our ears and our lives.

Who could have dreamed that, while on vacation, we could adjust our home thermostats to start cooling down so that it was comfortable when we arrived, tired from the trip and flight?

We can now decide, outside our homes, how bright or dark our home lighting can be and if it should be on or off. And, our pools can be heated and security systems activated on our way out of the house, automatically.

And, as more and more of these devices are introduced and popularized, they have become less expensive, making home automation affordable for most families. Connectivity is as much a part of our home life as apple pie, and mom, of course.

In addition to controlling music, security systems, thermostats and lighting, these integrated systems can also connect with other home components:

**Electronic Health Monitoring Systems** — Wearable devices can monitor calories burned, blood sugar levels and heart rate. Other apps connect you directly to a doctor's office or hospital for higher levels of scrutiny.

**Home Theaters** — Ultra-high-definition 4k video (four times 1080 HDTV) is available for projectors, and video tiling allows you to watch several video sources on the same screen.

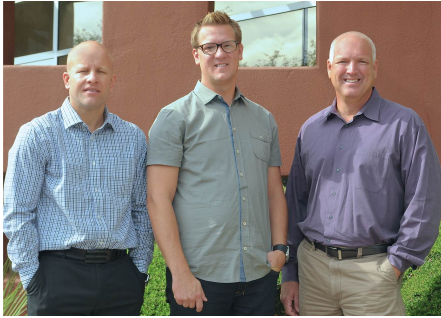
**Sound Systems** — The Dolby Atmos Audio Technology offers 3-D sound for your home theater.

**TVs** — Smart sets connect with the Internet, and some can be placed as disappearing units in walls and entertainment centers and even as Magic Mirrors, in which they appear inside mirrors such as those above bathroom vanities.

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*From Left to Right: Deric Andre (Cybersound) Ben Lentz (Cybersound) Tom Monte (Arizona Structures)*

Our Valley-based general contracting company, Arizona Structures, has worked closely for many years with companies such as VIA (formerly CyberSound) in Scottsdale to offer 21st-century connectivity and control to home owners. We have enjoyed this relationship, for ourselves and through the satisfaction of our clients.

As the largest home technology integration firm in the United States, VIA designs and implements turn-key home-technology solutions and works with the world's top architects and interior designers to blend state-of-the-art technology with great architecture and design.

Many of these electronic devices we use every day are quickly becoming part of what our friends at VIA, Ben Lentz and Deric Andre, call the Internet of Things (IoT). The devices are communicating through your home network to provide greater control as well as feedback to the manufacturers on what features are important to you. Nearly 26 billion devices will be connected on the IoT by 2020, Andre says, citing industry experts.

VIA's success with home automation has been accelerated by the company's partnership with Savant, the only Apple-based home automation system, he says.

"Savant has recently released a more intuitive and interactive user interface, which the company calls GUI. This new user interface allows you, the client, to set up personalized scenes that can be customized and saved — without the assistance of a programmer," Andre explains.

"That makes it even more customer friendly than former versions," he adds. "The Savant app is set up so that any Apple device you are connecting with, such as an iPhone, iPad, iPad Mini or Mac computer, all look exactly the same for ease of use."

What a great journey we are all on with technology, Baby Boomers through Millennials and beyond. Our homes have become star ships of discovery.

*This is the second of an ongoing series on your home and was assisted by David M. Brown (azwriter.com). Questions? Send them either to [david@azwriter.com](mailto:david@azwriter.com) or Tom Monte, [tom@azstructures.com](mailto:tom@azstructures.com). Offering four decades of experience in building and renovation, Arizona Structures serves the East Valley, Arcadia, Scottsdale and Paradise Valley and has recently won a 2014 Best of Gilbert Awards for General Contractor.*