

Techno Wizardry in the Home

Techno-wizardry sounds like something for the future, but actually homes with advanced technological ability are already in existence. If you want a home that is not only convenient but far safer than a conventional one, then a techno-savvy home is for you. A techno-savvy house is basically a network of appliances, light switches, and various assorted items which inter-communicate so that the whole house operates a lot more efficiently and smoothly.

Cutting-edge technology is being integrated into homes everywhere. In simple terms, a techno-savvy house has a 'brain'. Techno-savvy systems rely on a control panel, switches, or a touch screen to access the desired function. The connections are made using cabling within walls, ceilings, and under floors of the house, or an internal wireless system or a combination of both of these.

In order for the system to meet the needs of the home's occupants, it should not be too complex; it must be both convenient and time-saving. This means the architect, developer, and home owner have to co-plan very carefully in order to achieve a truly integrated, easy-to-use system. An integrated house system operates and manages all the electrical equipment in a home to increase comfort, flexibility, communication, safety and security, and also to reduce energy consumption.

A techno-savvy home can have tremendous impact on the occupants' lives. Many chores or jobs can be done more simply, as it allows all sorts of electronic gadgets and appliances to perform a variety of tasks. For example, an alarm clock can be programmed to send a message to the coffee maker to begin brewing the morning coffee. In another example, the refrigerator can suggest what could be eaten as a snack based on what it has inside. It then communicates with the microwave or oven to suggest a cooking time. It seems hard to believe that these types of refrigerators already exist. They can talk to the Internet and download recipes; they can even order new groceries as required, because they are able to scan and log bar codes of food items taken from inside.

Although there are many smart appliances available on the market and many more becoming available, probably one of the first aspects that is fully automated in a home is the entertainment system. While it is not necessarily making the lives of the occupants easier or making them any safer, it is fun being able to change channels by speaking to the TV and to use the Internet in conjunction with the television.

A techno-savvy house can save energy by lowering the temperature setting and switching off appliances and lights that are not required. It can also manage heaters, the air conditioning, and fans in such a way as to save energy. For example, if the outside temperature is only slightly more than the setting on the thermostat, then a smart home will use fans instead of the air conditioner, which uses a lot more energy. Also, if the television is not in use, then it will completely turn off the energy outlet, which also saves a small amount of energy. Over an extended period of time, these actions can mean a considerable saving.

Being able to monitor security from a central system makes the home a safe haven for all occupants. With a single push of a button, an alarm system puts the entire home into security mode. All the windows and doors close and lock, and the security systems are activated. Absent owners can check their security system via the Internet, due to hidden surveillance cameras around the house which send information. A further useful feature is that lights can be programmed to go on and off at random times when nobody is at home to make it look like somebody is there. This feature acts as a major deterrent to criminals.

In an emergency, people can panic and not react in the best possible manner. However, a techno-savvy house can help here. For example, at the time of a fire, the fire alarm would activate and the techno-savvy house's 'brain' immediately calls the fire brigade. It would also turn on the lights that lead to an exit and unlock all the windows and doors to make the escape route easier.

However, any techno-savvy home has a major vulnerability; it relies on a power supply. If this were to be interrupted, chaos would prevail. Being connected to a battery system is essential, so there is a back-up energy supply should there be a power cut. It is essential that safe entry and exit points to the home are always available. Provided the system is safe, it will save power and increase security and pleasure for house occupants of the future.

Question 1 - 6

Complete each sentence with the correct ending, **A - G**, from the box below.

Write the correct letter **A - G** in the answer box.

NB: There are more endings given than beginning.

List of endings

- A** is to reduce energy consumption.
- B** is very important for safety reasons.
- C** should be simple and easy to use.
- D** provide home owners with a means of checking security.
- E** can be done by switches or a touch screen.
- F** manages all the electrical equipment in a techno-savvy house.
- G** can be done by wireless or cables or a system of both.

1. To be convenient for the home owner, the central system ...
2. One of the main functions of the central system ...
3. The central system ...
4. Connecting items to the system ...
5. Surveillance cameras ...
6. A back-up power supply ...