

Published May 21st, 2014

Lean Back, Open the App, and Manage Your Systems

By Chris Lavin



Peter Lineweaver of Moraga starts his evening shopping at Safeway in Moraga by queuing up his Bose stereo system at home so that it will be playing when he arrives.

Photo Chris Lavin

out the remote for the automatic garage door opener, now so passé. The gate and the door are on the smartphone, too.

"There are so many more devices now that connect to the network," Zeidan said. "Audio visual - the audio-visual folks are having a terrible time adapting, because everything is computerized now, and didn't used to be. But starting in the mid-2000s everything started getting integrated into the network. Your speakers, hot tubs, swimming pools, lighting, shutters, room temperature - everything."

Zeidan picked up his phone and punched the icon for the security camera pointing to the parking lot.

"My car's still there," he said.

In his hand he held an average smartphone, and even that has more computer power than got the Apollo space mission to the moon in 1969. RAM memory has become so inexpensive, he said, that almost any electronic device in the home can be programmed to interface with a phone or a tablet. You can start the wash, turn on the hot tub, or filter your pool. He said Sonos wireless hi-fi systems and Lorex home security systems are particularly popular.

"Your smartphone is your universal remote," Zeidan said. "You don't have to have individual remotes for anything anymore."

Zeidan's real-time cameras could catch a thief in the act. He's poised and ready: His business has been burgled twice. He now has cameras and motion detectors throughout his Concord office, and is shopping for a system for his Lafayette home. Depending on the cameras' resolution, a system will run from around \$250 to \$1,200. Zeidan likes high resolution.

"If someone is breaking in, I want to be able to see a face," he said. "I want a license plate." He has so many cameras that if you're talking to him in the office and waving your arms you can see yourself on his phone.

Zeidan occasionally runs late getting home, and if there's a favorite TV show coming on, all he has to do is pick up his phone and have his home network record it. One of his favorite jobs was in

It was only 15 years ago that reporters at the San Francisco Chronicle attended a mandatory training session regarding references they were making to technology in their stories. "Don't," the trainer admonished, "write, 'And they're talking about it on the Internet.' That's a big old 'duh' by this point."

In 1940, reporters were writing the same thing, only they were calling it the telephone.

Now, in this story that will likely be deemed a big "duh" two years from now, people are indeed running their homes - from their security systems to their washing machines - via an application (OK, OK, an "app") on their phones.

"This is just the beginning," said Edward Zeidan, of Lafayette. He started his Nerd 4 Rent business back in 1984 and while he's had ups and downs with the economy, he's been in demand ever since. "People buy a nifty alarm system but then they need help with getting it synched with the rest of the network. It's all about the network."

Homeowners throughout Lamorinda are synching everything. Gone are the days of pulling

a large home that threw big parties, so he hooked up the network so that music could be synchronized by phone for the dance floor, with different music piped to the area where people were quietly chatting over hors d'oeuvres, and other areas. "You don't want loud dance music in all those areas," he said. But you don't have to run from one area to another to keep it all going, either, he said.

Sarah Kellar, a realtor with the Dana Green Team, has been surprised by how many homes now have Nest systems installed to control indoor temperatures. The systems also send alerts to a phone when a smoke or carbon monoxide detector goes off.

"Probably half of all homes have them now," she said. "We're headed into a new world again."

And even more people have them in their second homes, she said. Going up to Tahoe? Turn on the heat from the highway. "You program your phone to turn on the heat and you don't have to wait for three hours for the house to warm up. You can just turn on the furnace en route. Lots of people are using these systems that way." In reverse, you can turn your lights on and off back home to make it look like you're home, while monitoring your security cameras.

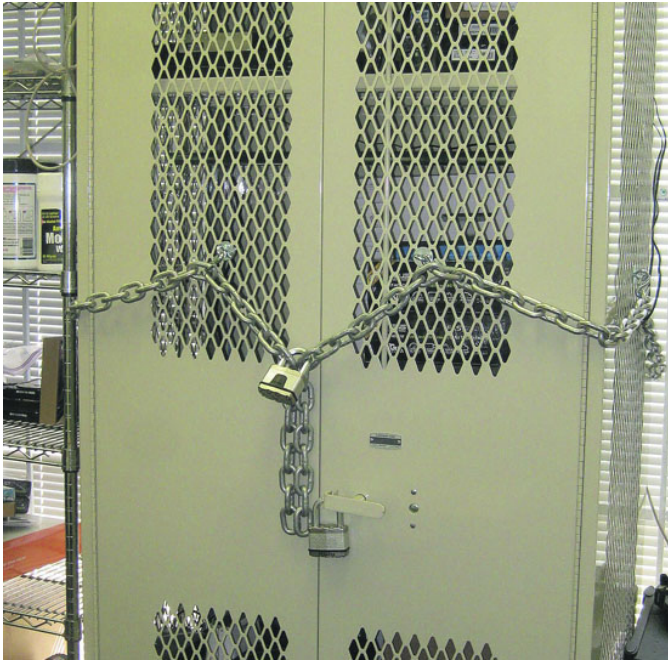
No app is available yet for shoveling the snow for arrival or cleaning the kitchen before you return. But they're probably not far off.



Edward Zeidan of Nerd 4 Rent shows that his car is safe and sound in the parking lot. He's shopping for a similar system for his Lafayette home that will be able to monitor his house by phone. Photo Chris Lavin



Small cameras are popular security devices that can be integrated into home networks, so that any motion or pictures can be sent to a cell phone.



Zeidan doesn't rely totally on technology for security. In what he calls "hillbilly security," he is not afraid of large metal locks.

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