

# 2016 May Be the Year Home Automation Goes Mainstream

You'll be hearing the term "the Internet of Things" a lot going forward. I'm sure it was a big topic at the recent Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas. The acronym is *IoT*. It refers to how more and more appliances and other devices are being connected to the Internet so that, for example, they can be managed by an app on your smartphone.

We are living in an increasingly connected world. Even our automobiles are being built with their own internet connections. Just this week my Tesla received an updated operating system over its own Internet connection, adding new features, not unlike downloading an iOS update for my iPhone.

Perhaps you recall your first experience with GPS navigation in a car. Like me, you were probably amazed that a screen on your dashboard (or on a Garmin device) knew exactly where you were on the planet and could guide you to your destination turn-by-turn. Next came traffic information generated by data gathered from GPS-enabled cell phones. That's how Google Traffic works — if enough cell phones are detected moving along any given street, you'll see on your navigation screen the green, amber or red lines indicating whether traffic is moving at, below or way below the speed limit on that street or highway.

We'll see more of this automation in our cars, but we'll also start seeing it in our homes. New homes are being built with intelligent thermostats which learn when to raise or lower the temperature. Homes are also coming with numerous devices such as doorbells that are connected wirelessly to your home Internet connection, so you can see and speak with someone at your front door, not just from inside your house but anywhere on your

## REAL ESTATE TODAY



By **JIM SMITH, Realtor®**

smartphone. You can be at your office downtown or in a coffee shop in Paris when someone presses your doorbell, and they might well think that you're inside. With an Internet-connected electric dead-bolt, you might even "buzz them in" with your smartphone.

You can buy an Internet-connected keypad to mount on your front door which you can program from your smartphone to operate that electric dead-bolt. You could, for example, program a 4-digit code that opens it anytime, and you could program another 4-digit code for your cleaning person which will only be valid at a particular date and time. You can create unlimited codes for different people and purposes and have an online record of which code was used on what day and at what hour.

Are you concerned about freezing or flooding (or both) in your home, such as from a failed water heater? A sensor communicating wirelessly with your Internet router could send an alarm to your cell phone.

At Golden Real Estate, we have an unheated closet behind our building containing a car wash system. To keep the pipes from freezing, we have a heat lamp which we leave on in the winter. But what if the bulb burns out? We installed a thermometer which is connected wirelessly to our Internet router, and if the temperature drops below a specified temperature, I get an alarm on my iPhone.

Security and temperature control are the most

common areas in which we're seeing increased home automation and Internet connection, but the possibilities are endless. Electrical outlets, switches and hard-wired devices in your home can be connected wirelessly to your Internet router so that you can control and program them from your smartphone.

At Golden Real Estate, we have a moving truck which we lend to clients and non-profits. We have an Internet-connected camera in our parking lot that allows us to see remotely whether it has been returned, in case we have another client waiting to use it.

Thanks to smartphone app programming, the possibilities are limited only by your imagination — and there are lots of imaginative people out there!

Based on what I'm seeing and reading, I expect 2016 to be the year in which this kind of home automation goes mainstream. As of today, our MLS does not have a field for noting home automation features in a listing, but, just like they added fields to the MLS a few years ago to list solar and other "green" features, I bet that within a year or two our MLS will be adding a field for indicating home automation features. By having a field instead of just mentioning it in the property description, it becomes searchable.

What functions of your home would you like to be able to control and program by phone? I suggest you Google it, because someone may have

## This Week's New Listing from Golden Real Estate

### Walk to Bear Creek Greenbelt From This Ranch Home

This proudly maintained ranch is on a quiet cul-de-sac, conveniently near open space and parks, shopping and entertainment. The large fenced backyard is designed for entertaining with a 10'x17' covered patio and private deck area. The CertainTeed roof is just 5 years old. In addition to the oversized 2-car garage, there is a large shed for storage. The finished basement has a bonus/rec room as well as two non-conforming bedrooms and a third bathroom. Located just off Yale Ave. west of Wadsworth, this home is a short walk from the expansive greenbelt around Bear Creek. Listed by **David Dlugasch**, this home will be held open this Saturday & Sunday, 1 to 4 pm.



### Find Service Providers on Our Website

Last week we announced Golden Real Estate's app making our preferred service providers available to everyone. Readers without a smartphone have asked if we can provide that information on our website, and the answer is yes. Just point your browser to [www.GoldenRealEstate.com](http://www.GoldenRealEstate.com) and click on the "Resources" tab to find the same list. In the five days after last week's announcement, over 200 of you downloaded the app, and several of you emailed suggestions of additional service providers to feature. Thanks! If you have a smartphone, you can still get our app at [www.clientlinkt.com/install/243](http://www.clientlinkt.com/install/243)



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