Creating a smart home

Tip sheet

What is a smart home?

Connecting the tech in your home to your Wi-Fi network, and to each other, has some benefits. It allows you to control several items in your home using your voice, from an app or from your smartphone/tablet and also to automate tasks (like turning on lights at a certain time). This technology can assist in many different ways in the development of independence and the establishing a safe environment for someone with disabilities to live.

When building a new structure or renovating an older structure, now is your opportunity to seamlessly installs as much smart tech as possible – for todays use and the future.

Here are some tips:

- Install Ethernet throughout the space. You can bury Cat6 cables within the walls before you place your drywall.

- Install speaker wires behind drywall or within the ceiling during your build.

- Many devices work across multiple platforms, so you don't need to worry about deciding which platform you are going use (iOS, Android, Windows, etc.).

- Consider heating (thermostat), lighting (smart outlets) and security (cameras) during your build. Most of these things can be installed easily during your renovations.

- Avoid novelty items. There are plenty of novelty items out there, such as a washing machine that will text you when it finishes spinning or a fridge that will monitor when you run out ketchup, but if they will not add quality or independence to your life, avoid them.

Protecting your privacy within a smart home environment

When you start to connect your home, you are sharing data about your home's habits, and those of your family/friends/pets/roommates, with tech companies. What these companies do with your information depends on their approach to making your information anonymous. You should always review the company's privacy policy. The privacy policy will explain whether the information they collect will be kept private or if they may sell it to third party companies for marketing purposes. To protect from hackers, ensure you do not connect to public WI-Fi and ensure you password your wireless router. Also, consider 'encrypting your router' and/or using a Virtual Private Network (VPN) to connect.