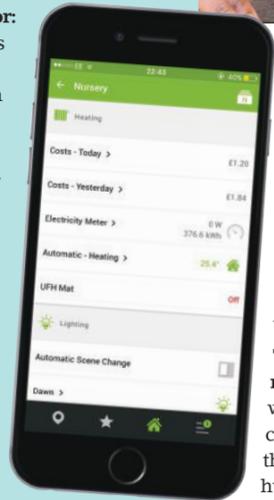




SOME KEY SMART HOME FEATURES

- ✓ **Presence simulator:** repeats the actions that you've done over the last seven days to make it look, realistically, like someone is in.
- ✓ **See graphical trends over time:** heating costs, energy use and temperature etc.
- ✓ **CCTV/baby monitor:** see in real time, what's happening in your home; see what the dog or cat is doing.
- ✓ **Bathroom fans:** Customise when they come on and how long for.
- ✓ **Set tasks:** record a task you want to execute at a specific time, e.g. turn off lights once you fall asleep.
- ✓ **Individual appliance control:** turn off your child's TV at a certain time.
- ✓ **Integrate with your music system:** e.g. Sonos, Onkyo, Yamaha etc.



GET SMART

Meet the first time buyer who has turned his apartment into a fully-integrated smart home, on an everyday budget

The idea of controlling your home remotely is nothing new. In the 1980s, we were amazed by lights that could be controlled with a hand clap, and curtains that opened by remote control – even the humble timer switch sat at the forefront of early smart home technology.

But we've come a long way from clunky gadgets. Today's smart home capabilities make it possible for all aspects of the home to be controlled using an app, even a finger print, and from anywhere in the world.

Creating a smart home that encompasses many different features has, until recently, been seen as technology reserved for the rich and famous – something that you might see on MTV's *Cribs*. But lately, we've seen impressive

smart home technology become available to the mass market. British Gas's Hive, for example, allows users to control their home heating remotely, while Philips Hue lighting system lets you set your lighting via an app and a variety of others focus on home entertainment, or security.

A first time buyer in London, however, has created a smart home system that can integrate as many, or as few appliances and features as you'd like, and that brings high-end features to people on a budget. Stefan Knight, a 27-year-old engineer and electrician has converted his two bedroom apartment in Harlesden, northwest London, into a smart home that can be controlled from anywhere in the world. And he's done it all on a small budget.

IN CONTROL

Using an app, Stefan and his wife, Promise, can control their lighting, heating, television, music, baby monitor, web cam, and watch their energy consumption, when and wherever they like. From a global control, the app allows them to control individual room, or the home as a whole.

"It's completely changed the way we use our home," says Stefan, who moved into Catalyst's Craven Park development with Promise, in 2015. "We're completely in control of it. It's more efficient, and also gives us peace of mind. We were away last week and were able to check on the flat, for example."

Stefan runs an electrical contracting firm, JSJ, with his two business partners. The team have been installing smart homes to high-end clients for six years and so, when he bought his first home, he decided it could benefit from some features too. But Stefan's home is different: "This is the first truly affordable smart home we've done," he says. "We are now able to bring the high-end features that you might see in a multi-million-pound penthouse into normal homes like ours."

So how does a home like this come about? "It started with the heating," he says, "it irritated me – I found it hard to use and there is no main control centre. And I like to be warm, so I wanted to be able to control it properly."

The heating can now all be controlled via the app, on a smartphone, and used anywhere in the world. The app also tracks the temperature in certain rooms and lets you view your daily, weekly or monthly expenditure.

But it didn't stop there. "When we first moved in, I didn't want to do anything like installing wires etc, so once I realised I could do the heating wirelessly, I decided to do the lights too. Then it sort of spiralled from there."

CUSTOMISABLE FEATURES

The Knights' apartment now acts as the show home for the smart home side of the business and includes a multitude of great features. Perhaps the most attractive for people who are always in a hurry is the 'House Off' function. Instead of rushing around, turning off all the appliances and going back to check them all before you go out, simply press House Off and the job's done. And, as new parents, Stefan and Promise are delighted that they can watch their baby daughter Lizzie sleeping via the app. "If we're out and have a babysitter, it's nice to just check in and see her sleeping, even though we trust the babysitter 100%!" he says. "But as you can see, the controls aren't for intangible purposes. They're practical features that we use all the time."

The features are also completely customisable, so can be adjusted depending on how you use your home. "If an appliance is network compatible, we can make it smart. You might be someone who always forgets to



Photos by EE & Co

turn the iron off and always worries about it, for example, so we could include that in your features. Then when you're out you can check the app, control that switch, or have it included in the House Off function." You can even control your intercom from anywhere in the world if you wish. Something that might be handy if you're expecting deliveries.

BUDGET-FRIENDLY SMART HOMES

A crucial benefit for first time buyers and those on a budget is that the app allows users to monitor their expenditure. "We can now keep an eye on our expenses, as the app shows us how much each room is costing to heat per day, month or year," says Stefan.

It's also perfect for people who don't want to do any rewiring, or break into any walls. It's a completely wireless system and something

with which Stefan and JSJ hope to impress not only homeowners, but also property developers. "We're able to create these homes for home owners for a fraction of the cost of the big projects – it's truly affordable and can be done for under the price of a Macbook Pro," he says. "But we know it would be even cheaper if we could install the tech while the homes are being created, that way all these great features would be available on the first day you move in."

Stefan's passion for home tech is infectious and it's clear to see that the smart features have made a difference to the young family's busy lives. The prospect of penthouse-style, life-enhancing technology in an everyday home is even closer than we'd thought.

To enquire about customisable smart homes, email services@jsjelectricalcontractors.co.uk, call 0203 283 8485, or go to jsjelectricalcontractors.co.uk