



Keeping it connected

The backbone of a connected home is its Wi-Fi network. That network is dependent on routers — the better the router, the more stable the network. A stable network facilitates better streaming and better network speeds. Besides, it makes it easier for your devices to communicate with one another. But that's not the end of the story.

To make your home network worthwhile, add a media server — which is essentially a hard drive that would have all your music, movies and photos, among other things. Think of it as a personal cloud that stays connected to your router. At home, you can pull media through Wi-Fi to play on your device, without having to worry about making multiple copies on different devices. Outside, you can pull pictures or even documents by accessing your drive through the internet — though this might be offered at a price.



> The Google OnHub router, which uses the Google On app, fits right in with the decor



> This tri-band ASUS RT-AC5300U router promises to give online games a 'boost'



> The touch screen on the TP-Link Touch P5 router enables you to set up your device without a PC or an app



> High-definition and IP-enabled cameras give you a peek into what's happening at home while you're out



> Video doorbells could be the first line of defence for your home



Say hello to a SMART HOME

Abhik Sen picks some of the newest internet-connected home devices that will make life easier and more secure in 2016

Save time on chores

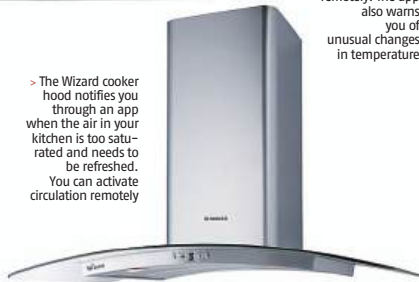
The humble refrigerator, oven, hob, chimney, washing machine and dishwasher can be connected through a Wi-Fi network and controlled with an app. For now, you could set your washing machine to start washing clothes at a certain time remotely, or be notified on the app that the pizza has been baked. Yes, this is for real — it's called the Hoover Wizard. Samsung will be integrating its SmartThings technology into its televisions, thus allowing them to connect to other compatible devices and carry out some other functions too. And, at the upcoming Consumer Electronics Show, LG will unveil its Signature line, which would include connected TVs, refrigerators, washing machines and air purifiers.



> The Wizard oven can be set to pre-heat remotely, so that you can start cooking as soon as you get home



> Hoover's Dynamic Next refrigerator can be activated remotely. The app also warns you of unusual changes in temperature



> The Wizard cooker hood notifies you through an app when the air in your kitchen is too saturated and needs to be refreshed. You can activate circulation remotely



> The Dynamic Wizard washing machine recommends wash programmes after it has detected the degree of soiling



> The connected Dynamic Wizard dishwasher lets you activate the wash cycle remotely and helps identify the best wash programme

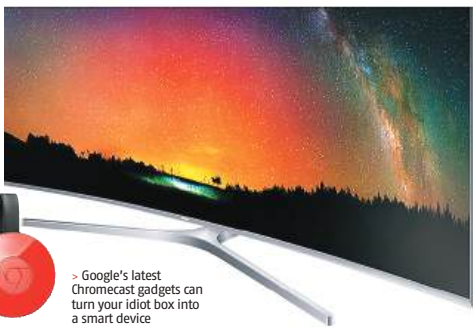
A 'touch' of comfort

A home automation system typically controls lights, cooling, drapes and even audio-visual equipment through apps. If you want to go the whole hog, smart home solutions make sense. Companies such as Legrand and Lutron are taking care of that. Although motion-activated lights could be available for less than ₹10,000, you must be ready to fork out around ₹10 lakh — or more — if you're planning to automate the entire apartment. Of course, with that kind of investment, you will have control over lights, air-conditioning, windows and drapes, and recessed audio-visual equipment (such as home theatres and speakers, which would come out of storage at the touch of a button, thereby turning your living room into a movie hall).



> The app from Lutron enables your iPad to become the control centre for your home's lighting, cooling and entertainment systems

> Samsung's latest TVs would be Internet of Things-enabled and let you connect to devices compatible with SmartThings



> Google's latest Chromecast gadgets can turn your idiot box into a smart device



Leisure time

Home entertainment is all about better streaming and high-definition videos, which would be impossible without smart televisions that are capable of displaying high-resolution content. Samsung is expected to make most of its high-end 2016 line Internet of Things (IoT)-compliant, and this should make things interesting. Also, LG's MiniBeam LED projectors, which are wireless and Bluetooth-enabled, should ensure that you can watch videos stored in your phone on the big screen. And the latest version of Google's Chromecast can turn any old TV — which has an HDMI port — into a smart one.

But what is life without music? The subdued-looking Bang & Olufsen's BeoPlay A6 wireless speakers fit right into your living space.



> LG's MiniBeam projectors can project phone videos through Wi-Fi or Bluetooth



> B&O's BeoPlay A6 wireless speakers blend in with your surroundings, while ensuring great sound



> These multifunctional touch-screen switches from Legrand provide simple access to the automated system in your home

