

## Switched on automation

In the old days you would have an intercom to open the front gate. With today's systems you can turn on any TV in the house to see who is there then pick up any phone to let them in. **Paula Shearer** discovers that smart technology has arrived in our homes

**F**ULL-SCALE home automation is becoming more of a reality in Queensland with the high-end sector of the property market now spending hundreds of thousands of dollars on cutting-edge technology.

But an entry-level market is also beginning to emerge, with project homes incorporating some measures of automation for as little as \$5000.

Electronic Living managing director Damian Cavanagh says the industry has grown exponentially in the past five years.

The Brisbane-based company has just received three awards at the Custom Electronic Design and Installation Association's (CEDIA) Asia-Pacific Electronic Lifestyles Awards – winning the best home theatre under \$75,000 category. It also received highly commended awards for best integrated home installation – in both the \$250,000-\$500,000 and \$150,000-\$250,000 categories.

Cavanagh says it's not unusual for high-end properties to spend up to \$250,000 on automation.

"Where it used to be considered a luxury in these properties, automation is now being included in the design specs," he says.

While smaller projects might be for a media room and entertainment system, today's automation will often provide home networking; lighting, heating, and security control; automated blinds, shutters and awnings plus swimming pool management.

A fully automated home will feature an integrated system designed to do all the thinking for the owners – sequences can be programmed to take over when they enter or leave the property.

"If a homeowner is leaving the house, then a common sequence is to switch off all the lights once the alarm has been armed," Cavanagh says.

"Or, upon the opening of an electronic door or security gate when they arrive home, they can have a sequence which turns on a light path, cues the lift to the garage level and plays music to greet them."

CEDIA Asia Pacific executive director Stephen Miller says the automated electronics industry once just included audio-visual systems.

"But it's more and more an emerging market now," he says. "There has been such an explosion in technology. If you look at where we've been over the

last couple of years, your telephone can control your whole house now."

Remote access is available and Cavanagh says that owners can have complete control over their home electronics using an iPhone, iPad or laptop.

Among the projects recently completed by Electronic Living are the eye-catching Scott Street Apartments at Kangaroo Point.

Cavanagh says each of the 12 apartments in the 15-storey building has been completely fitted out with smart-home technology in what he believes is the largest project of its kind in the state.

The automation system in each apartment is operated by a 38cm touch panel and the user-friendly system has been a hit with potential purchasers – despite the building being marketed to empty-nesters not familiar with the technology.

Scott Street development manager Jonathan Kavali from Waterford Properties says it's the first time the developer has outfitted an entire building in this way. Part of the reason for that leap of faith is the fall in the price of technology.

With the apartments ranging from \$5 million for the full-floor, three-bedroom designs to around \$10 million for the two-floor penthouse with private pool, the building is certainly pitched to the upper end of the market.

But Kavali says affordability of the systems has seen more acceptance of smart wiring and home automation in all levels of the property sector.

"A lot of people are smart wiring now, if not a full home automation, most electronic contractors are doing at least some to future-proof the home," he says.

CEDIA's Miller says that as more clients request some level of automation in their homes, architects and builders are becoming more knowledgeable about the industry.

He advises homeowners to ensure they deal with someone trained to complete an installation correctly.

» More information: [www.cedia.com.au](http://www.cedia.com.au)



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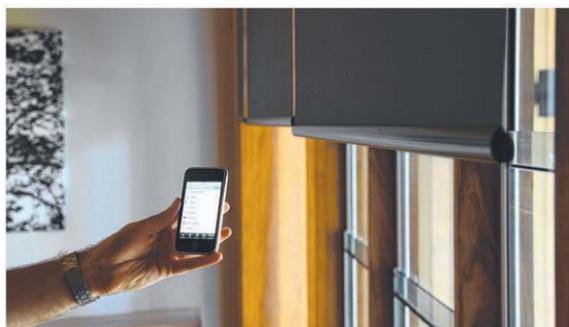
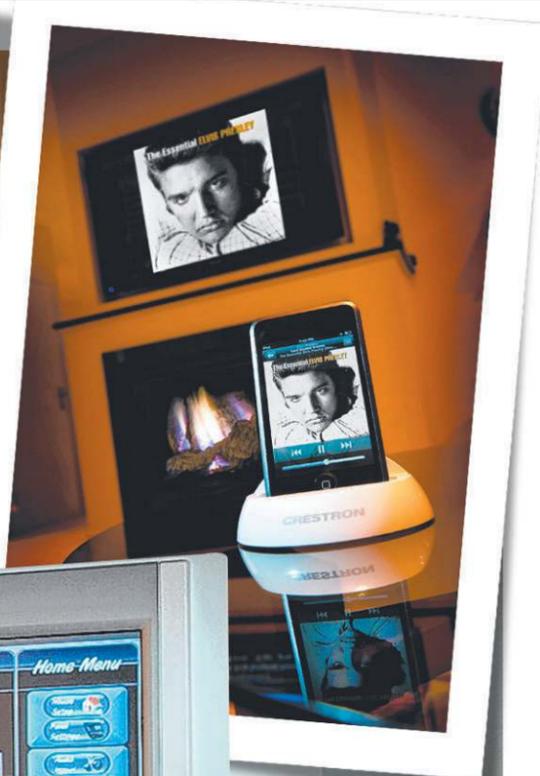


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# 1962

The year cartoon character George Jetson and his family burst on to the scene, living in an automated skypad apartment with robots and bubble cars at their service



## HOME coming

with Paula Shearer



### Cubism

For a smart, stylish and practical way to display your most treasured items, Clever Cubed has come up with a floating cubes triple pack. Available in a high-gloss black or white finish, the cubes can be used for showcasing items such as photos, vases and collectables or storage for books, files or toys. Each cube in the three-piece set is 10cm deep but the widths vary: 25cm, 20cm and 15cm. Weight capacity is 2kg. Priced less than \$35 for the three-pack, you can pick up Clever Cubed from Bunnings stores.

[www.bunnings.com.au](http://www.bunnings.com.au)



### Sweeping style

The dustpan and brush has never looked as glamorous as this Sweepup design by Eva Solo, who hoped to breathe new life into an everyday product usually kept out of sight. Combining shape and function with a high degree of user-friendliness, the Sweepup is a broom and dustpan in one. The set is made from stainless steel and plastic with the broom handle measuring 85cm. The 90cm dustpan handle means the notion of bending down to gather dust off the floor is simply swept away. It's available from Top 3 By Design for \$145.

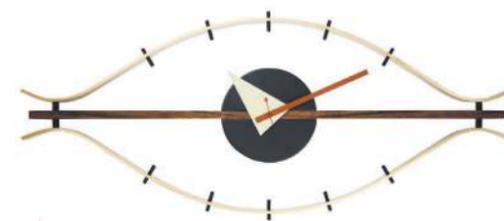
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### Seed pod

Every avid gardener has their own stash of seeds and what better way to have them close at hand than this neat Seed Packets Organizer from Quality Products

Direct? At \$55, the attractive tin comes complete with dividers and seed envelopes. [www.qualityproducts.com.au](http://www.qualityproducts.com.au)



### Time's eye

Always focused on integrity of design and creating pieces accessible to the public, the late George Nelson's modernist furniture designs are 1950s classics. The metal wall Eye Clock is shaped like an eye with brass curves representing eyelids, the dark dowel pieces as eyelashes and, of course, the clock-face as the iris and pupil. This Life Interiors replica is true to Nelson's original design. Measuring 76cm wide by 35cm high and 7cm deep, it costs \$149.

[www.lifeinteriors.com.au](http://www.lifeinteriors.com.au)