

COMPUTER VILLAGE



INSPIRED BY STL JOBS CLINTON PEABODY
"Where People and Technology Come Together"

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Best Gifts for a Smart Home 2018

It's that time of the year, first Black Friday, then Cyber Monday and the Secret Santa and all the other shopping tags that yes Christmas brings. So we at Computer Village are giving you some suggestions for IoT tech gifts with the help of the website TECHLEAD. In the article by Betty Joita, she gives us a look at some great stacking stuffers and useful gifts.



This Philips Hue White 2 Pack Bulb Kit is compatible not only with Amazon's Alexa but also with Apple's Homekit and Google Assistant.



The GermGuardian might not be the type of product you've heard of before but this Wi-Fi enabled purifier allows the users to control and monitor air quality from anywhere. It comes with voice control capabilities for Alexa and it provides instant notifications and alerts for filter and bulb replacement via the companion app.



This Connected Coffee Maker should be the perfect gift for someone who loves their coffee in very specific ways: it's customizable and offers temperature control and it can be operated remotely via the companion app to brew that perfect cup.



Someone's got a sweet tooth? How about this Smart Scoop Ice Cream Maker for a gift? It can be pre-cooled to the temperature of one's choice and it has no less than 12 hardness settings from sorbet to frozen yogurt and gelato.



We're not done with the lights on this list just yet! This **Dimmable Smart Table Lamp** from Philips is not only wireless and portable but it lasts up to 3 hours on a single charge. It can be controlled via Alexa, Apple HomeKit or Google Assistant.



You can now help someone seamlessly integrate not only audio but chargers too, in one simple piece of furniture: this **Studio Smart Table**. At 25 inches tall, has a built-in bluetooth speaker and a wireless Qi charger. It comes with a rechargeable battery so it can be moved around anywhere in the house for continuous wireless use. It's compatible with pretty much any wireless enabled device out there as well.



There's also this **Smart Weather Station** that allows them to connect to the official Ambient Weather website and send it real time data. It comes with a high definition TFT Display Tablet that receives wireless wind speed, direction, rainfall, temperature, humidity, UV and Solar Radiation from the outdoor sensor array, and barometric pressure, humidity and temperature from the indoor sensor and more!



How could we talk about IoT and Smart Homes without adding the mighty **Roomba** to this list? This Roomba has a 3-Stage Cleaning System and Dual Multi-Surface Brushes that can pick up everything from small particles to large debris.



This **Logitech Harmony Hub** can control up to 8 remotes and a number of apps into just one app. It works with Alexa as well as iOS and Android.



We'll end the list with the **Echo Spot** – with 2nd generation far field voice recognition whoever you may gift this device to can use it to watch video flash briefings, see music lyrics, weather forecasts, to-do and shopping lists, browse and listen to Audible audiobooks, and more. They can even ask it to turn down the lights, show baby monitors, cameras and even lock the door. It's capable of controlling thermostats and garage doors, among other things.

Checkout the website **TECHLEAD** for more informative articles:
<https://techthelead.com/best-iot-smart-home-gifts-2018/>

Promising Smarthome Tech That's Still Too Challenging to Install

JOSH HENDRICKSON @canterrain

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Smart technology has changed our home life. If you had the clapper, you know, “clap on, clap off”; we considered this a Smarthome. Now we have the Ring door display, Nest thermostats, Smart faucets, and lights. We can control all our devices from our phone, there’s even an Alexa for the car now! The only thing we are missing is the George Jetson briefcase car! Yes, manufacturers are telling us about the next best thing in the Smarthome tech but what does it take to transform your home? In this condensed version of the article by Josh Hendrickson are the bullet points followed by a link to the complete article.

-Computer Village

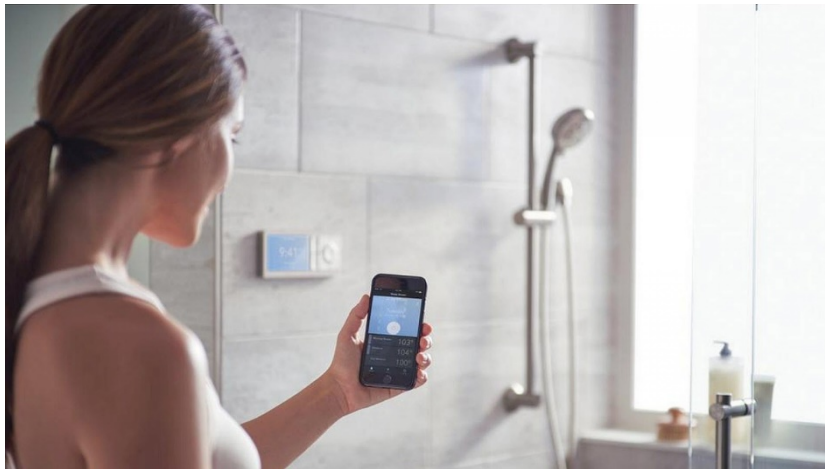


Image by Moen

Smart lights, plugs, and voice assistants are easy to install and use. But some promising tech isn't ready for the average person, even if it does look great. These smarthome gadgets look fantastic but have too many barriers. I spend a lot of time looking at smarthome devices. What I have, what I don't have, what's

available, and what might someday be possible. As a smarthome junky, I default to wanting it all. But better sensibilities (plus my family) keep me in control. Some gadgets, even if they exist right now, aren't ready for the average smarthome consumer. And that can be for any number of reasons, whether it's price, the need for a professional installer, or required alteration of your home and property. It's one thing to wire in a video doorbell or light switch; it's another to run power to your shower or lay down wires in your yard.



Figure 1: Image by Moen

A few companies, like Moen and Phyn, offer smarthome devices that monitor your water usage. With that monitoring comes leak notices, water usage measurements, and even the ability to shut off the water.

The related issues with these systems are:

1. You need a plumber to install the device because the system has to be installed on the main water supply to your home.
2. To shut the water off at say the sink, you must turn off the water to the entire house.
3. Smart water devices are expensive; you can expect to pay from \$500 to \$700 before a plumber.

4. These systems require power so you may need an electrician for that.



Figure 2: Image by Lutron

Smart shades seem awesome. You've probably seen them featured in a movie or a commercial, especially if the point is to depict someone as very rich. As the person wakes up, they utter a simple command or push a button and all the shades in the room rise. It sounds fantastic, and in practice, it is.

The price of getting a custom standard shade is already high. Adding smart technology only exacerbates the problem. Lutron Serena shades, one of the most popular options on the market, can cost \$350 or more to cover a single window. And you still need to buy the \$150 Lutron bridge for remote control.

Smart Showers Need Power



Figure 3: Image by Moen

What sounds nicer than rolling out of bed and telling Alexa to turn on the shower to 95 degrees? By the time you get to the bathroom, the shower is warm. It's not just the steam that tells you the shower's ready, the digital readout confirms the temperature. And if you don't want warm water, after all, you can decrease the temperature with the touch of a button.

Everything about a smart shower sounds great until you realize it needs power. Smart showers, like U by Moen, generally call for a powered thermostatic shower valve. You have to buy both the smart shower device and the thermostatic valve for the system to work. You can place the valve anywhere in your bathroom with some rules. The spot you pick needs power and an access point after the install. You'll also need to run a data cable from the valve to the shower if you didn't place it directly behind the showerhead.

In the process of installing the water monitor, you may need to run water pipes to your chosen location, and power too if the spot you chose doesn't have an outlet. The preferred location for the valve is inside your wall, so you're talking some construction, too.

If you're not comfortable with that, you'll need to hire a plumber and electrician (possibly someone that can do both) to fill in the missing pieces for you. And some smart showers, like U by Moen or KOHLER Konnect, can cost between \$300 and \$600 (not including the \$300 valve) before the install process.

Robot Lawnmowers Want Flat Ground



Figure 4: Image by Husqvarna

Picture an oversized Roomba and swap the vacuum for cutting blades. That's what your average robot lawnmower, like Husqvarna's Automower or Robomow's RS630, resembles. isn't always necessary.

Most robot vacuums work either by a bump and track system, randomly hitting walls and furniture, or a LIDAR system to map your house. Neither of those methods is enough in an open yard. So in addition to bump and track, most robot lawnmowers require you dig up your yard and install wire boundaries, similar to an invisible dog fence.

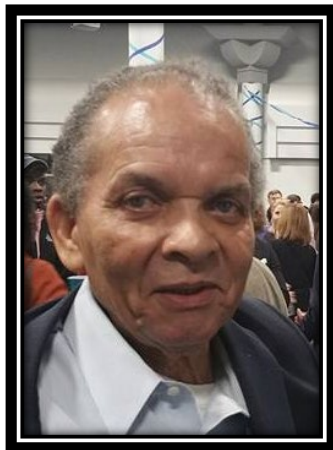
Worse yet, manufacturers design robot lawnmowers for flat ground. They have trouble with slopes (and most won't

promise anything beyond a 35-degree tilt), and they get stuck in holes. These lawnmowers work best in a square yard with no trees, bushes, hills, or crevices. That's a significant restriction for a lawnmower that costs somewhere between \$1600 and \$2000.

Hope on the Horizon

All of these gadgets show a lot of promise and could be great additions to a Smarthome. If you're willing and able to spend the time and money, you could have your water monitor or shades now.

For the complete article follow this link: <https://www.reviewgeek.com/23454/promising-smarthome-tech-thats-still-too-challenging-to-install/>



Computer Village
Executive Director - Don Holt

Don has been on the battle field for youth development and education for over 30 years. Retirement from Xerox only gave him more time for his passion. Don Holt is an “Unsung Hero” and advocate for youth, education and the black community. “Don continues to stress the importance of IoT as a major component for the growth of young people associated with job stability and economic success in our community.”



Don Holt

Executive Director

E: don.holt-cv@att.net

E: cvillagestl@gmail.com

Home: 314-741-4854

Mobile: 314-537-0274

5404 Sun Trail Drive

Florissant MO 63033