Envisioning Tech

My hobby that I am choosing to write about is home integration technology. I am very interested in the many different ways that home technology systems work and the interoperability of different devices. Home integration technology is the interoperability of a home's different functioning devices. There are many terms that can be used to describe such systems as home integration and home automation. Automation is the act of making things automatic. With home automation systems one is able to automate or make their lives more automatic in regard to their homes.

The reason I am fascinated by home automation is due to the ability for devices with different protocols to connect through a common medium. This interoperability is one of the many things about home technology systems that fascinate me. Also the connection between the physical world and the technological world is very evident when working with home technology systems. When working on a HVAC system or a lighting system the changes that are being made in the programming is visible when using the system. The physicality of this specific field of technology is what draws me towards it.

Some of the new advances in the field of home automation include new devices that are being released to help create more sensors for one's home automation system. Belkin has a suite of home automation products called WeMo. Their WeMo product is capable of enabling complex control over one's home
Belkin recently released new sensors for this system to enable new actions from these sensors.¹ For example with the new motion sensor that was released when one walks into a room with the sensor and WeMo enabled lights the lights can automatically turn on. There is no more need to look for a light switch.

This advance in user-installed technology has impacted my field as a whole. Home automation systems used to only be for people who were willing to spend a lot of money on a custom installer where systems are now aimed at end users. More systems are coming to market, which promise ease of use for end consumers with easy set up processes. The pros of this change are much wider adoption of these systems and more people with automated homes. Since these systems are becoming cheaper and easier to install many people are installing them in their homes thus expanding the reach of home automation systems. There are also many cons that come along with this new form of home automation. These systems employ a one size fits all theory, which does not always work for people looking for more complex automation. If these systems are installed incorrectly it portraits the technology in a bad light.

Change is occurring throughout the entire sector due to a shift in marketing and products. New products are emerging in the consumer space and fewer products are being designed for the custom installer. It is due to this that a shift towards consumer-oriented products is inevitable. Eventually we will reach a point when consumer products are able to emulate the experience that one could only

receive from a custom installer. We have yet to reach this point but it is predestined that this change is going to happen.