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THE FUTURE HOME IS SMART

Malaysia is fast catching up as more developers offer tech features in their projects



By HAKIM HASSAN
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SMART homes are the way to go as more tech companies jump on the bandwagon to introduce new and exciting products touted to enrich our daily lives in the near future.

According to research firm Statista, the smart home market constitutes the sale of networked devices and related services that enable home automation for private end-users (B2C). The devices – connected directly or indirectly via a gateway to the Internet – mainly control, monitor and regulate functions in the house.

"The remote control and monitoring of individual devices and, if applicable, their direct communication with one another (Internet of Things) is an essential component of intelligent home automation," explains Statista.

"Therefore, services that are necessary for the maintenance or control of the household network are also considered, for example subscription fees for control apps or external monitoring services."

Smart-home solutions can roughly be divided into two groups.

Integrated smart home: A single occupant home or household in multi-unit dwellings that are equipped with a central control unit (gateway) connected to the Internet and from which a large number of networked devices can be linked to one another. This group of smart homes uses devices from at least two market segments.

Stand-alone smart home: An isolated application that does not

necessarily use a central control unit, serves a single purpose and can be directly controlled (via a router) from a smart device. Included are all smart homes that use devices from only one segment.

According to Statista, revenue in the Malaysian smart home market will amount to US\$105mil (RM434mil) in 2019 and is expected to show an annual growth rate (CAGR 2019-2023) of 25.5% resulting in a market volume of US\$260m (RM1.07bil) by 2023.

The research firm added that household penetration is 4.1% in 2019 and is expected to hit 12.6% by 2023 while average revenue per installed smart home now amounts to US\$82.57 (RM341).

Media reports say this will be boosted as companies such as Tenaga Nasional Bhd Energy Services (TNBES), a wholly-owned subsidiary of Tenaga Nasional Bhd, are eyeing at least 30% of its current customer base, or about nine million customers, to be equipped with smart home systems in the next four years.

The utility company recently fitted 80,000 homes in Melaka with smart meters and aims to equip 340,000 homes after receiving positive feedback from pilot projects in the state and Putrajaya.

Ready-made smart homes

A slew of developers now offers smart homes to customers, among them is Sunsuria with its Bell Suites development in Sunsuria City, Sepang.

Sunsuria Bhd chief operating officer Simon Kwan said: "Based on Sunsuria City's principles of 'Smart, Livable, Suitable', we have these smart features in Bell Suites – SOHO homes located strategically across the main gate of Xiamen University Malaysia and named with the aspiration to promote limitless innovation and creativity."

He mentioned that the homes are fitted with Smart Home Gateway, which makes smart devices work together and connect to the Internet, and Gang Switch which controls lighting and supports time setting, linkage control and scene management through an app.

For security, the developer has installed Smart Door Lock, an all-in-one system that integrates lock, doorknob, camera, motion detector, night vision, microphone with speaker, high-precision fingerprint identification and other advanced measures which can trigger off in the event of a burglary.

For voice control options, the developer offers the Amazon Alexa personal assistant.

In explaining what constitutes a smart home, Kwan said it is a combination of appliances that have Internet connection and devices which interact with each other through a single network.

"Smart homes are powered and connected by proprietary frequency bands through mesh network whereby no physical wire or cabling is required when setting up a smart home system, much like plug and play."

"The system allows you to select your preferred scene based on your

"SMART HOMES PROVIDE CONVENIENCE BASED ON AN INDIVIDUAL'S LIFESTYLE."
– SIMON KWAN



lifestyle and it will act on it accordingly. For example, lights will only be switched on when you open the door through Smart Door Lock," he said.

Asked what factors influence buyers to go for smart homes, Kwan cited lifestyle and energy saving as the main considerations. "Smart homes provide convenience based on an individual's lifestyle and energy usage learnt through behaviour," he added.

He also said that this type of property is much sought after by millennials who want smart features in their homes.

"In fact, millennials drive the demand for smart homes. Not only are they tech savvy, they are always on the lookout for what's new in the market and are ready to accept smart technology in their lifestyle," Kwan concluded. ♦



Kwan says Sunsuria Bhd believes in having a liveable environment and ready infrastructure the minute residents move in.