



A CONNECTED KITCHEN

As children we watched sci-fi movies where people could switch on their lights with a clap of the hand or a voice command. Where the fridge kept the grocery list and where the oven could be switched on while you were on your way home from work. These crazy ideas of an intelligent connected kitchen are no longer the thing of movies and books. All over the world we are seeing the influence of connectivity. The important and convenience of life via WIFI and apps. The Internet of Things (IoT) has made it possible for inanimate objects to 'have a mind' and nowhere is this 'mind' being put to better use than in the kitchen.

While a fully smart, connected kitchen, is still out of the price range for most South Africans, smart, connected appliances are already here. The move to embrace this technology is motivated by the fact that smart appliances maximise energy efficiency, and they are easier and more convenient to use. Appliance manufacturers have concentrated on finding solutions that give people more time and more help. The appliances are not just clever gadgets, but are designed for easy and uncomplicated use that give real value-add to their users.

Smart appliances help do much of the hard work for us via a simple app. Ovens and hobs can be set remotely to cook certain food stuffs in particular ways – a steak medium rare for example.

The appliances are programmed to know the ideal temperature and time for cooking, and ensure both are regulated precisely. The app can even prompt you if the food needs turning or to be basted. Some ovens can send a high-resolution colour image of the cooking in progress right to your phone or tablet, while others allow you to access YouTube or a database of recipes while cooking. Sensors can also determine the core temperature of the food and turn the oven off ensuring the food doesn't dry out or overcook. It is also possible to pop a pre-prepared roast in the oven before heading to work, and use the app to start the cooking process before you get home, having the meal ready and waiting for you when you get in.



Extractors are now available that communicate with their paired hob via WIFI and adjust their extraction capacity based on what is being cooked. They can also be adjusted, turned on and off remotely via the related app.

Smart coffee machines can facilitate settings specific to the particular tastes of individuals in the family, even allowing for different blends for different people, all programmed via an app.

Your laundry can be smart too, with washing machines being available that can facilitate you adding items to a cycle already in progress. The app determines a point, at almost any stage of the cycle, where additional items can be added. Some ranges allow your washing machine and tumble dryer to communicate via WIFI so that the tumble dryer knows what to expect load wise and adjust its settings accordingly.



Most smart appliances can be activated via voice control if connected to a smart device like Amazon Echo and Alexa Voice Service. These will facilitate you issuing voice commands and

the corresponding appliance responding. These devices are quickly becoming the centre of many European and American homes and are being used to connect the entire household, and those in it, to the internet acting as a modern-day butler for the home.

The list of appliances that can interface via WIFI and applications is growing daily. Dishwashers, lighting, vacuum cleaners are all joining the smart crowd. It may be some time until the connected kitchen becomes the norm in South Africa but it is definitely on its way. If we are to follow the trends of Europe and the UK, more and more homes will move to having a device like Alexa at their heart. With the going pace and pressure of daily life, optimising convenience and free time is a priority and smart appliances are designed to do that for one of the busiest rooms of the home – the kitchen.

With thanks to the following KSA members for their assistance with this article:



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