

5 Tips to keep your smart home hack-free

Smart home adoption is on the rise globally, and while affordability and infrastructure have prevented rapid uptake in South Africa, this is beginning to change.



Source: pixabay.com

As products that are more inexpensive enter the market and connectivity improve, smart home adoption is increasing and consumers will need to consider security and protection against hacks.

Matthew Louw, corporate marketing supervisor at LG Electronics South Africa, explains that the primary concern is automated cyber-attacks.

“These are the same sort of threats that people experience on personal computers – cryptocurrency mining, compromising of user passwords and data, and ransomware viruses,” he says.

“ “Just as you would take action to protect your computer, so too it's important to protect your smart home.” ”

Here are tips to ensure your smart home is protected against malware attacks:

1. **Protect your router** - All Wi-Fi internet connections in your home originate at your router. Protect your router by choosing a strong password (not the default one it came with) and keep its firmware up-to-date.

2. **Keep your gadgets up-to-date** - Install new updates for your devices whenever they are available, as these include patches that protect you against known bugs or security threats. This includes keeping the relevant apps updated on your phone, as this is generally where you will receive update notifications for the gadgets themselves.
3. **Security settings** - Use the security settings available to you on the smart device. Most smart home devices offer various options, from setting a password to responding to commands only from matched voices, or powering down and disconnecting when not in use.
4. **Read the Ts and Cs** - Before giving up your data, ensure you know exactly what you're getting yourself into. Do your research on the product, as well as the privacy and security terms.
5. **Trusted platform** - Pick one trustworthy platform to manage all devices. Rather than using a range of unconnected smart devices, which will mean different apps, Ts and Cs, security and privacy policies, and passwords, pick one if you can – carefully. This is not only the best way to enjoy a seamless smart home experience, but also to protect against security threats.

“If you put the basics in place, a smart home can offer incredible convenience,” says Louw.

“South Africans are only just starting to realise this now. For example, LG’s ThinQ connectivity software on our appliances connects to the user’s mobile device via the app, and this allows you to do things like turning on the air-conditioner or the washing machine before you get home. You can talk to your fridge or request a specific video or series on your TV. As South Africa continues to embrace this tech, you will be able to control lights and door access, and eventually, not too long from now, you’ll benefit from the AI technology LG already offers so that the products learn your preferences and adapt accordingly. It’s a whole new smart world coming our way.”

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