

# 2018: a space oddity

## The Pitfalls of the D.I.Y. connected home

By Nick Bilton

### For the first time in recent memory,

I had to call tech support. It wasn't for my computer or my smartphone. It was for my house.

This summer, I had the bright idea to connect my home to the Internet. As anyone who has walked into a Home Depot recently can tell you, the future has supposedly arrived. And it's called the Internet of Things.

The idea is that all the gadgets and devices in our home — including light bulbs, security cameras, door locks, smoke alarms and thermostats — will be connected online and can be controlled wherever there is the Internet, such as on our smartphones. Did the babysitter lock herself out of the house? Did you leave the lights on? Forgot to lower the thermostat? No worries. The solution is a few screen taps away.

So to join the future, I picked up dozens of so-called smart products with the mission to install them myself. These products are touted as “plug and

play,” meaning they are supposed to just work. But as I soon learned, that could not be further from the truth.

It took me the better part of a week to get these devices working. Some of them wouldn't find my wireless network, others wouldn't connect to my phone. Still others would give me indecipherable blinking red and yellow lights.

So rather than you having to experience what I went through, let me walk you through some of the good, the bad and the downright abysmal devices I experimented with. The first thing I discovered is that these devices are not as simple to use as advertised.

Take security video cameras. Not long ago, the equipment was expensive, hard to install and even pricier to maintain. Now there are hundreds of security webcams on sites like Amazon that promise peace of mind for under

