

'Smart' gadgets detect water leaks, turn off overheated home appliances

Simple, but effective

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SPECIAL TO HOMESCAPE

Imagine worrying if you left your iron or electric blanket on at home while on vacation. Or, sleeping in your bedroom, unaware that your basement is flooded from a water leak or burst pipe.

How invaluable an alarm, or other notification, would be in those instances. Fortunately, there are some cool gadgets on the market now designed to alert you in such scenarios.

D-LINK WI-FI SMART PLUG

The D-Link Wi-Fi Smart Plug (\$69.99) is a device you plug into an electrical outlet that senses if any appliance plugged into it overheats, according to Carina Tsai, product line manager of D-Link. But, that's not all.

"The D-Link's built-in thermal sensor will automatically turn off the overheating appliances," added Tsai.

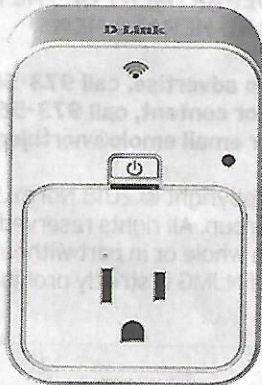
Moreover, you can operate any appliance plugged into the D-Link via a "smart" device.

"Use the free mydlink Home app to instantly turn devices on or off from your smartphone or tablet," Tsai said. "The mydlink mobile app is compatible with both Android and iOS operating systems."

In other words, you can arrange it so that every day, after work, you walk into a brightly lit home – chilled to the perfect temperature by the AC – with your favorite song playing. You can also program your home appliances, lights and other electronic devices powered through the D-Link, to turn on and off as needed.

Plus, the smart plug is easy to install and use.

"Simply insert the smart plug into an outlet, plug your device into the plug, and press the button on the plug to connect to your W-Fi," explained Tsai.



D-Link Wi-Fi Smart Plug

There are no additional parts or attachments needed for using the product and no significant maintenance is required, except one.

"The only [need] is to check the latest firmware," said Tsai. "It is recommended to upgrade the firmware to keep the optimal performance in function."

The D-Link Wi-Fi Smart Plug also monitors power consumption of connected devices so you can track energy usage. In addition, the app sends you customized notifications.

HONEYWELL LYRIC WI-FI LEAK & FREEZE DETECTOR

If you'd rather not have "Water, water, everywhere..." in your home, then the Lyric Wi-Fi Leak & Freeze Detector (\$79.99) is for you. The device is an early warning system that alerts you when there's a water leak. Just place the Lyric, and the included four-foot sensor cable, near trouble spots such as the sump pump, water heater, washing machine and under sinks and you'll know the minute there's a leak.

But that's not all it does, according to Ted Booth, Honeywell's senior director of user experience.

"[The Lyric] will not only alert you when there's a water leak but it will [also] let you know when a pipe begins to freeze, which, especially in the winter, is very helpful," said Booth. All you need to do is wrap the sensor cable around the pipe.

"It also lets you know if there's excess humidity," he added.

So, you can prevent burst pipes and high humidity from damaging your home and belongings, including wood floors, carpets, fine art, clothes and treasured valuables. Booth said just set a high-and-low threshold for temperature



PHOTOS COURTESY OF HONEYWELL

The Lyric Wi-Fi Leak & Freeze Detector sends an alert for laundry and sink leaks (below).

‘Smart’ Gadgets: Simple to install, maintenance-free

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and humidity on the Lyric and it will sound an alert when the ambient conditions fall outside that range.

Best of all, the Lyric not only emits a high, audible alert when it detects excess humidity, a water leak, or pipe freeze, it also notifies you on your smartphone wherever you are. Booth said after installing the device, download the Lyric app and you can begin to receive alerts on any smartphone (Apple or Android). You can set up alerts to be emailed to neighbors or family members, as well, in the event you are unable to immediately respond to the notifications. Another unique feature is that the app converts the daily temperature and humidity readings into a graph so you can visualize the data on a month-by-month basis.

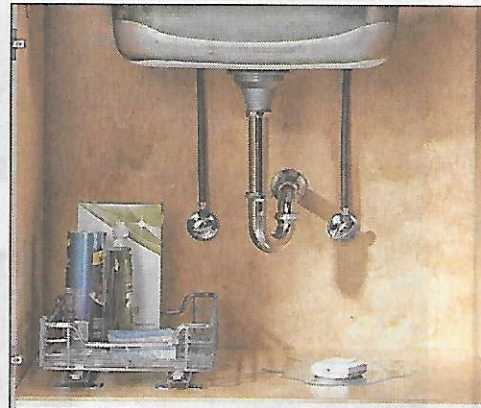
Anthony Chirido, operations director at Shotmeyer Brothers Heating & Air Conditioning in Hawthorne, said the Lyric is simple to set up and virtually maintenance-free.

“It’s extremely easy to install,” Chirido said. “Put the batteries in and follow a couple of prompts to enter your Wi-Fi information and you’re done.”

The batteries, included with the unit purchase, last for three years, Booth said. The product emits several alerts when the batteries need replacing and the app displays remaining battery life, as well, he added.

Chirido said he decided to buy the Lyric after a disastrous incident.

“I was personally introduced to this device



when I was away ... and there was a slow leak under my kitchen sink,” he recalled. “Over a two-week period of being away, there was extensive damage from that slow leak. After that happened, purchasing this device was the best investment.”

Chirido cited a particularly useful feature of the Lyric is that it can be placed anywhere as needed.

“It can be moved from location to location,” Chirido said. “When we are away overnight, we put it near the hot water heater and boiler area. During this past cold snap, we put it in the garage where we have water pipes.”

Booth added extra sensor cables, purchased separately, can be attached to provide up to 500 feet of coverage. He said installing additional units throughout the house will prevent damage from water leaks, frozen pipes and excess humidity throughout the whole house, from the attic to the basement.