

5 Ways to Master Your Domain with One Smart Home System

DESIGN NEWS + LIFESTYLE

By Jensen Power — July 2, 2018

Presented by Control4

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A prominent designer “tech-talks” about using Control4 to orchestrate smart home devices and emphasizes the importance of future-proofing our homes.

The future is here. This is what architectural designer [Karen Sealy](#) tells all of her clients. The award-winning designer, who has appeared regularly on HGTV and Cityline, encourages everyone she works with—both tech enthusiasts and first-time users—to consider adopting at least one smart device into their home. “Some people don’t think they need it,” she says, acknowledging that many clients believe home technology to be futuristic, out of reach, or just additional clutter. “But once you use it, you won’t want to live without it ever again,” she urges.

Karen suggests that, even if you start small with just one or two smart devices, it’s good to prepare your home with a central hub for any smart home functionality that may be desired down the road. The “brain,” as Karen refers to it, is a [Control4](#) Controller that is tucked away and out of sight, and provides a powerful smart home foundation allowing for a scalable functionality.

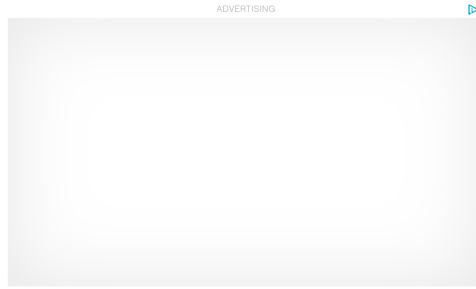


Architectural designer, Karen Sealy, calls Control4 the “brain” of the home. From lighting to

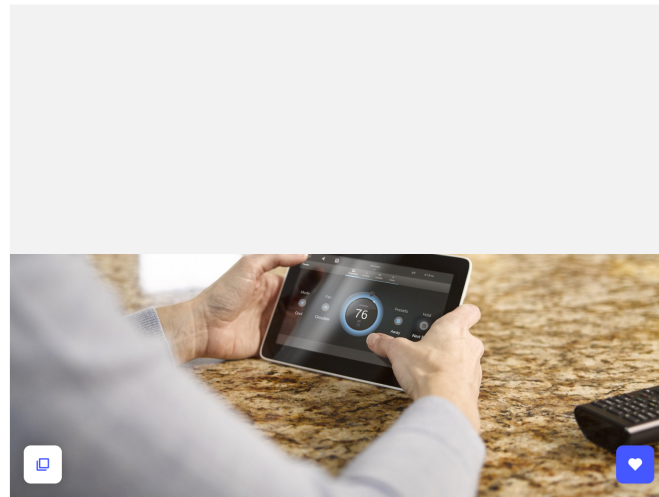
shades, garage doors to smart locks, Control4 can manage it all.

Image courtesy of Control4

[Photo Categories: kitchen](#)



Control4 essentially orchestrates the smart devices in a home. This one system is able to control the entire home with a simple tap of a button or voice command. Karen shared her favorite features of the Control4 Smart Home system with us, and how it gives her and her clients optimal functionality in their homes.



From the Control4 Touch Screen, homeowners can operate nearly all devices in the home, including lights, thermostats, indoor and outdoor speakers, the security system, garage doors, shades, and sprinkler systems, to name a few.

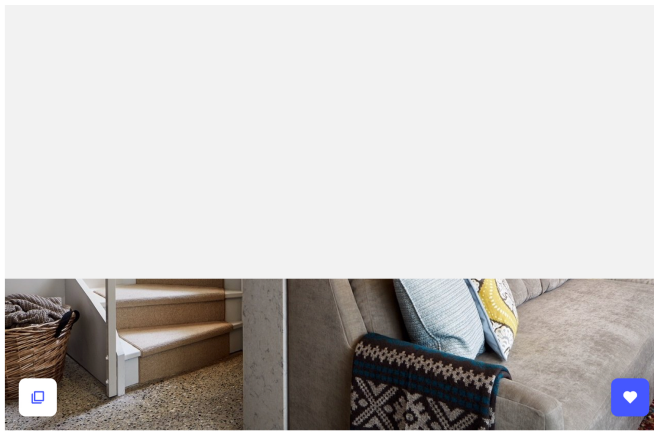
Image courtesy of Control4

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Control Every Device in Your Home...

Karen's own home is equipped with smart technology, and completely operated by Control4. "No matter the smart device, Control4 handles it. When I walk into my house, the lights turn on, my nightly Spotify or TuneIn radio fires up, and the thermostat knows the ambient temperature outside and automatically keeps the house nice and warm for me," says Karen, explaining that all of her devices are commanded by Control4, turning themselves on and off depending on her activations or pre-determined "scenes."

The Control4 system has an open architecture that plays nicely with any number of devices on the market — nearly 12,000, in fact. "I can press 'Bright' on my Control4 Keypad and all the lights turn on. Or I'll press 'Entertain' and the kitchen lights brighten, the overhead light fixtures illuminate, and the pot lights dim. It's beautiful, layered lighting activated just by hitting a button," Karen continues. "All the pieces of the puzzle just speak to each other. It's pretty great."



Karen's home is completely operated by her Control4 system. When she wants to watch a movie, a tap of a button turns on her overhead projector, lowers her projection screen, dims the lights, and draws the shades.

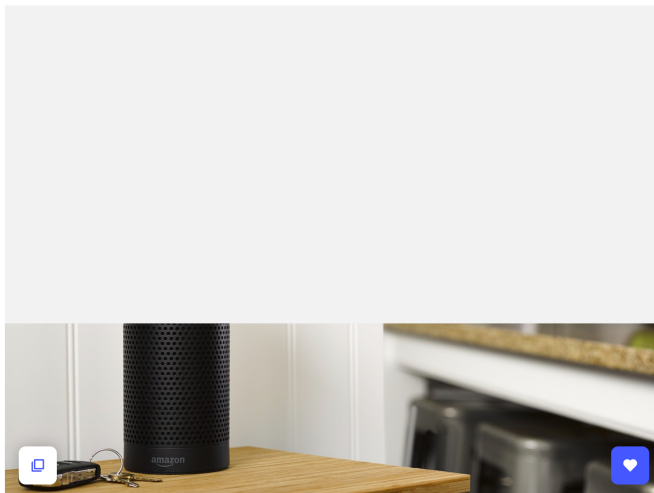
Image courtesy of Karen Sealy

[Photo Categories: living room, sofa, bar, stools, wall lighting, terrazzo floors](#)



...With a Single Button

Karen has all of her preferred features preset within her Control4 system that are each activated by their own button. For example, Karen has a projector mounted to her ceiling instead of a TV. To watch a movie, her 85-inch projection screen must descend, the projector and stereo need to power up, and she prefers the lights to dim for optimal viewing. Each of these actions are typically operated manually, but with her Control4 system, there is no need to run around flipping switches or managing remotes. The process is streamlined with a single button labeled 'Movie' that makes everything happen simultaneously. Karen also has control of her window coverings and the fireplace to really set the mood. "Again, I hit one button," she marvels. "I can press it from my kitchen and by the time I get down there, everything's ready to go."



Control4 Keypads provide control of many devices in one place. The customized buttons operate lights, music, security systems, and more. Compatibility between Control4 and Amazon Alexa allows the entire house to be commanded by voice, as well.

Image courtesy of Control4

[Photo Categories: kitchen](#)



Control4 Keypads control more than the lights! They are a stunning interface for the entire home, combining flexible button configurations that complement any design and decor. A simple press of a button starts a "scene," activating simultaneous events. Homeowners can choose how they want their home to respond and buttons are able to be customized accordingly.

Image courtesy of Control4



Get Rid of the Clutter

As a designer, Karen is acutely aware of aesthetic. She understands that customers increasingly want customization within the home, but with so many devices and custom options, homes have become clogged with more and more unsightly hardware. "There can be so many toggle switches on the wall," she explains when discussing custom lighting. "I call it wall acne." She often sees awkward solutions for hiding technology; bulky media consoles taking up precious space to hide wires, cable boxes, and Blu-ray players. "There's no reason to have those things out anymore," she says. Karen's solution with Control4 operating all devices allows hardware to live invisibly in often unused areas of the home — for instance, on racks under the stairs or in an equipment closet.



Control4 integrates with existing HVAC systems, radiant flooring, forced air, and more, to ensure comfort in the home.

Comfort At Home and While You're Away

"Your smart home is talking to your thermostat. So if it's sunny, your blinds will close," Karen explains. This is just one way the Control4 system automatically makes your home comfortable by speaking with a home's HVAC systems, radiant flooring, forced air, and more, so that devices or systems in the home can adjust when temperatures shift or when the home is unoccupied.

But, arguably the most important aspect, is that it provides peace of mind. "When I'm away, I've had people come by with big deliveries. I can open the house, have them put the stuff inside, and then lock it again remotely," says Karen. "I can look at my phone and ensure that it's locked."

At her vacation home, Karen has cameras installed on the roof to monitor wind and snow. "It will alert me if there's any movement up there," she says. With the right devices in place connected to Control4, it's easy to secure your home, even from afar.



If Karen has one piece of advice to offer when it comes to smart technology in the home, it's this: "Plan for it. Smart home tech isn't futuristic, it's happening now."





Control4 users can customize the buttons on their wall keypads, and they can use the *When >> Then* homeowner personalization feature to adjust automation settings at any time.

Image courtesy of Control4

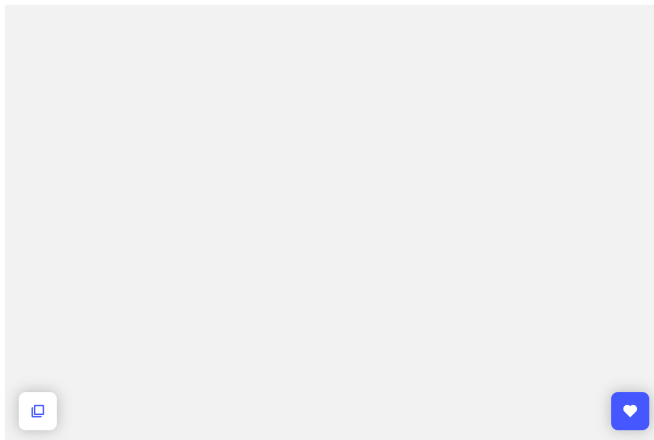
Photo Categories: outdoor, concrete patio, porch, deck

Prepare for the Future

Home technology's longevity is always top-of-mind for Karen. "We're living with smart home tech whether we know it or not. It's changing and adapting so rapidly," she says. "Even if you feel you don't need it now, future-proof your home! Wire for it. Give it a good network backbone. Put in the structural background stuff. You'll have an electrician there anyway, so just do it."

She also offers a reminder that it doesn't have to be overwhelming or a large inaugural expense; homeowners can start small. "You might invest in a great stereo receiver, and in this home you just have little bookshelf speakers. But in your next home you want really nice overhead Triad Audio speakers, and all of your audio equipment is phenomenal and works with your Control4 system," she says.

Karen finds that her clients never regret setting up their homes for future technology. "I've been working with some clients for years, and now we're at the stage where they're putting in TVs that talk to the lights and the in-floor heating that talks to the thermostat. People are seeing how practical it is."



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Image courtesy of Control4

Photo Categories: chair, recessed lighting

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Karen truly believes that a smart, connected, and streamlined home is attainable for anyone. And with Control4, Karen is able to help her clients create their ideal, functional home with a few key devices. "It can be simple, just a couple little things to enjoy and grow with," she says. But, she advises, "Plan for it. Smart home tech isn't futuristic, it's happening now."

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