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A Smarter Take on Tech

"Works With Nest" Lets Nest's Smart Devices Talk to Cars, Appliances, Wearables, Remotes, and More

Posted by Harry McCracken on June 23, 2014 at 9:00 pm

So far, Google's Nest Labs home automation arm makes two smart, web-enabled devices: the [Nest thermostat](#) and [Nest Protect smoke/CO detector](#). The count will go to three when the company finalizes its agreement to [acquire the startup behind the Dropcam security camera](#).

Those products, of course, are outnumbered by vast and growing quantities of smart-home hardware and software created by other companies. And from now on, some of the most interesting things which Nest's devices do may be actions they perform in concert with third-party gear.



Following up on **plans it announced last fall**, Nest is launching a developer program which lets other companies make their products compatible with the thermostat and smoke detector.

Some of the "Works With Nest" automations which Nest is talking about:

- **Mercedes-Benz cars** can alert a Nest thermostat to when you'll arrive home so that it can begin adjusting the temperature while you're on your way.
- **Logitech Harmony universal remotes** can be programmed to control a Nest thermostat.
- A Nest thermostat can tell a **Whirlpool washer and dryer** that you're not at home, allowing them to switch to slower, more energy-efficient cycles.
- When your **Jawbone Up24 wristband** knows you've woken up, it can tell a Nest thermostat so that it can tweak the temperature.
- **LIFX light bulbs** can flash if your Nest Protect smoke detector goes off, and fool prowlers by turning on and off randomly when your Nest thermostat tells them that you're not around.
- The excellent **IFTTT service** for **DIY automation** works with the Nest thermostat and Nest Protect smoke detector, letting you write your own recipes, such as one which alerts the neighbors by text message if smoke is detected at your home.
- Starting this fall, the **Google Now smartphone app** will let the Nest thermostat know when you're on the way home, and will allow you to set it through an "OK Google" spoken command.

All of this sounds pretty cool—and it's presumably not a coincidence that the news is being announced on the eve of Google's IO developer conference.

Nest is emphasizing the measures it's taking to protect data collected by its devices: They won't relay any personally-identifiable information to other hardware or software, and such third-party recipients will only be able to store ten days' worth of data.

As Nest faces more and more competition in categories it's pioneering, such as **Honeywell's new Lyric thermostat**, "Works With Nest" could help it keep its edge. The company says that over 5,000 developers have already expressed interest in developing Nest-compatible wares.

3 comments

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🏠 Home Automation, Nest



WaltFrench June 23, 2014 at 9:45 pm #

So companies like Johnson Controls and Honeywell are going to promote a competitor's standard because ... well, because all the Mercedes owners will want to consider a thermostat NOT developed by the standard originator?

Google apparently thinks nobody remembers when Word, Excel had an inside track with Windows and previous powerhouses Lotus, Borland and WordPerfect quickly bit the dust.

This sounds like the Google TV that was going to allow set-top boxes to compete...er, was going to drive the cable companies out of business. So nobody played ball on the sharply tilted playing field, and the "standard" died a quick death.

Really, it seems Google has exactly zero respect for any competitor's intelligence; thinks they'll all pitch in to demolish themselves.

With Android, Google encouraged open competition, a model marred only by the stupid, expensive and failed acquisition/divestiture of Motorola. Now they're trying to repeat the Moto disaster. Whatever they're smoking is a LOT more powerful than anything I ever touched.



Harry McCracken June 23, 2014 at 10:08 pm #

I can't imagine that Google expects Johnson Controls and Honeywell and others which compete directly with Nest products to support Works With Nest. And I don't think it's a great universal solution for home automation

compatibility. But it might be cool even if it's only supported by companies which have no reason NOT to support it.

To continue the early-Windows metaphor, Windows was indeed not a level playing field for the Lotuses and WordPerfects of the world. But some non-incumbent companies which didn't compete directly with Microsoft embraced it and did well—Corel, for instance, with CorelDraw.



Barnes Dave June 24, 2014 at 7:20 am #

Loved the Nest thermostat. Do not trust Google (as evidenced by my fake Google account used here). Goodbye Nest.