



Secure, Convenient, Accessible, and Smart: a Dismediating Prehistory of Smart Domestic Media in the late 20th Century United States

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Prehistories of smart domestic technologies often center on the conveniences and futuristic visions of twentieth century homes, where technologies of home governance offered to increase security, ease, and control of domestic life. Often missing from these analyses are considerations of the representational and material roles of disability in the introduction and domestication of mundane domestic media. Looking to smoke detectors and garage door openers, this article posits that promotional discourses of security and convenience prioritized nondisabled perspectives even as the devices increased accessibility for many. The accessibility fostered by these technologies, which disabled people often used as platforms for further innovation, offers a compelling third trajectory for understanding the promises and limits of “smartness.”

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In the largely forgotten buddy comedy *How to Beat the High Cost of Living* (Robert Scheerer, 1980), financially struggling friends played by Jane Curtin, Susan Saint James, and Jessica Lange conspire to steal prize money from a shopping mall. The elaborate heist will begin when Curtin's character leaves her home. The plan immediately hits a snag. Curtin walks to her garage, gets in the car, and presses the button on a garage door opener. Her face and the opener point directly ahead, towards the garage door (as well as at the camera and viewer) (fig. 1). Nothing happens. She reaches outside the window and presses again, aiming directly at the receiver. She gets out of the car and points the opener at the receiver on the garage wall from only a few feet away. The door



does not move. She attempts to lift the garage door manually, to no avail, then pivots, walks back inside, and calls the power company.



Fig. 1:
Still from *How to Beat
the High Cost of Living*
(Robert Scheerer, 1980)

Her power has been shut off for nonpayment, reflecting the conceit of the film. Upon being told that she cannot pay until Monday morning, Curtin attempts to persuade the representative of the power company to restore power immediately. She lies, "This is an emergency—my mother, her kidney machine, which runs on electricity, which has kept her alive for seven years...". She then play-acts at responding to her mother: "Yes, mama... the man on the other end of the phone cares. You do care, don't you? You'll turn the power back on?" The power representative praises her—"Lady, that was beautiful. Really terrific... Great performance"—but recognizes the falsity and hangs up rather than restoring power. The scene concludes with an exterior shot of the home as the car bursts through the unopened garage door, allowing the farcical heist to progress.

This scene draws its humor from the failure of a mundane domestic technology and an attempt to fix the situation through an appeal to the rhetoric of emergency and debility. The logic of emergency demands that something extraordinary be done to prevent harm (Ellcessor 2022). The appeal to debility, evident in the fictional mother's presumed age and her use of a "kidney machine," attempts to motivate charitable action, drawing on longstanding framings of disability as a pitiable individual condition to be solved by benevolent others (Dolmage 2014). Through this, the inconvenience of the power outage is reframed as a matter of medical need, safety, and accessibility. While this reframing fails in the film, the scene is provocative in articulating the slippages between convenience, accessibility, and security in the domestic media of the late twentieth century. The garage door—like the electricity it relies on—registers as more or less necessary in the context of different people, capacities, and situations.

In this article, I pose security, convenience, and accessibility as relational and intersecting concepts that can illuminate the current and historical implementations of “smart” domestic media. Security, convenience, and accessibility emerge through varied intersections of material artifacts, cultural discourse, users’ bodies, minds, and affective states; what is convenient in one instance can be a necessary security or accessibility feature in another (Neves and Steinberg 2024; Alexander 2025; Ellcessor 2022). These concepts prismatically re-fract, illuminating different cultural meanings, presumed affordances, and assumptions about users and domestic life. They may also obscure one another, as some framings dominate or crowd out others. By considering these concepts in concert, we gain a fuller picture of the benefits, affordances, risks, limitations, and possibilities of domestic media.

To explore this conceptual intersection, I offer a dismediating cultural history of two mundane twentieth century media technologies of domestic control that presage our current “smart” technologies: smoke detectors and garage door openers. These mundane media devices have rarely been noted in prior analyses of domestic media, and are advertised predominantly in terms of security and convenience. I focus primarily on the decades in which these media technologies were domesticated, from roughly the 1960s to the early 1990s (Haddon 2011), and triangulate them through a consideration of (in)accessibility, demonstrating the centrality of dis/ability to the construction of domestic space, technology, and social relations in this time period and in visions of domestic smartness. This reading is facilitated by the fact that this time frame corresponds to the rise of the Independent Living Movement, the development of Universal Design principles, and advances in the civil rights of disabled Americans (Hamraie 2017; Williamson 2020). Disability history offers a provocative counterpoint to the well-established narratives of increasing neoliberal consumerism and technosolutionism in mainstream domestic media cultures, particularly as these trajectories overlapped. Domestic efficiency expert Lilian Gilbreth, for instance, is often cited as a leader in the postwar development of “smart” homes and kitchens. Gilbreth’s designs fostered a version of smartness as enacted through the material fit of bodies and technologies (Murray 2026). Less well known is that Gilbreth also worked explicitly to fit disabled bodies to technologies at the Institute of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation (Williamson 2017). By considering disability in analyses of historical domestic media, we can find additional intersections and produce more nuanced accounts of how convenience, security, and access overlapped and conflicted in the construction of the hypermediated “smart” home.

Smoke detectors and garage door openers offer useful pathways to understanding the materiality of domestic media and their relationships to disability (or diminished capacity). Ultimately, I argue that these devices were promoted through discourses of security and convenience as achieved through literal and symbolic control of domestic space and relationships. These emphases overshadowed the role of such devices in creating accessible environments and served to distance these technologies from the threat of disability or diminished

capacity, even as the devices themselves fostered accessibility for many disabled households and increased access for people experiencing varied forms of debility or diminished capacity. Simultaneously, these technologies provided platforms for accessible innovation by disabled people, which offer an alternative trajectory for thinking about the rise of “smart” domestic media.

DOMESTIC MEDIA, MISFITS, AND METHODS

While scholars have considered the mediated production of the domestic sphere and its political economy, particularly through television and mass media, detailed attention to the appliances that furnished the twentieth-century home has been less common (Morley 1988; Spigel 1992, 2001a). James Hay, in his work on the intertwined relationships between domesticity and discourses of national defense and neoliberal risk management, argues that we must look to these “technologies of home-governance” to understand how notions of safety and security moved from the national stage to the privately managed home (2006, 354).

Technologies of home-governance have most often been studied in relation to so-called “smart homes” or “homes of the future,” in which increasingly technologized and networked devices offer to take over the work of domestic management with various degrees of automation (Spigel 2005; Woods 2021; Humphry and Chesher 2021). Many analyses of smart homes and related technologies emphasize convenience and safety: “smart life today has been built on measures of trust, helpfulness, comfort, safety, control” (Murray 2026, 12); smart homes promise “ease, convenience, and security” (Crawford 2025, 324). While these are certainly the promises made by promulgators of such media, convenience and safety (or security) are not universally shared concepts or experiences—they are constructed quite differently in relation to social differences. As David Neves and Marc Steinberg write, convenience often denotes “a luxury for some that is a requirement for others” (2024, 7). Domestic ideals are deeply racialized and classed, with the promises of technologically enabled security and futuristic smart homes only available to individuals and households with sufficient capital and privilege to buy into technologies that offer to extend and entrench aspirational ideas about the home, family, and daily life (Caluya 2014; Woods 2021; Murray 2026). Similarly, the logics of the smart home draw upon the gendered legacies of domestic convenience technologies, which promised leisure to the housewife without absolving her of domestic responsibilities (Spigel 2001b; Neves and Steinberg 2024). More contemporary smart home technologies retain gendered associations of femininity and domestic labor (Strengers and Kennedy 2020; Pink et al. 2022; Sadowski et al. 2024).

Despite such considerations of gender, race, and class, there has been little consideration of the relationship between smart domestic media and disability (or accessibility). Domesticity itself is often premised on an idealized body or family that fails to consider impairment or alternative arrangements of bodies in space, and design of domestic space and technologies thus prioritizes nor-

mate perspectives (Imrie 2010; Rembis 2017; Woods 2021). Smart homes and technologies similarly often presume and address nondisabled users.

The language of “fit” is helpful in constructing a nuanced approach to disability and domestic media. Sarah Murray describes “smartness” as “the smooth fitting of bodies, technologies, and everyday life” and offers a historicization of smartness in the late twentieth century through various “fits”—outfits, retrofits—that linked bodies to machines and routines (2026, 5). Murray, however, does not consider the “misfit,” a critical concept that locates disability experience and knowledge in the material mismatch of disabled bodies and their surroundings in a given place and time (Garland-Thomson 2011). The misfit offers an alternative relationship, an oppositional consciousness, and an emphasis on the material culture and embodied experiences that accompany rhetorical invocations of “smartness” (Garland-Thomson 2011, 597; Humphry and Chesher 2021, 1171). Experiences of the misfit are characterized by “friction,” which Neta Alexander opposes to “immersion,” between digital interfaces and varied bodies (2025); we might think of accessibility as an effort to reduce friction or create a new fit. Histories of accessible technologies reveal longstanding practices of crip technoscience in which disabled people have innovated to create access and foster their own convenience and security in an environment of otherwise inaccessible technologies (Lang 2000; Hamraie and Fritsch 2019; Alexander 2025). These innovations can be read as alternative prehistories to smart homes and devices, emerging not only from mainstream visions of domestic futurity but from innovations born of specific needs, positionalities, and activist interventions.

Thinking with the misfit enables a dismediation of “useful” domestic media of convenience and security, revealing moments in which these promises fail to consider disabled bodies and moments in which disabled people extend these values through creative innovations (Wasson and Acland 2011; Mills and Sterne 2017). Dismediation asks us to consider “disability as a constituting dimension of media, and media as a constituting dimension of disability”—even and perhaps especially when they appear not to (Mills and Sterne 2017, 366). This methodological approach extends beyond representational or rhetorical analyses to consider the material, experiential, and industrial structures through which disability informs, shapes, and transforms media technologies and cultures.

Thus, this article is a work of media and material history. Using tools from cultural studies and material culture studies, I look to advertisements, newspaper reporting, coverage in women’s magazines, reporting and advertisements in disability publications, letters to the editor and customer feedback, and industrial archives to understand how these technologies were promoted to and received by the American public (Grossberg 2010; Vannini 2009). These materials were found in archives including the Smithsonian Museum of American History, the Rubenstein Rare Books Archive at Duke University, the Vanderbilt University Television Archive, the Worcester Institute of Technology, the online archives of major news publications and women’s magazines, and print archives of several publications aimed at d/Deaf or disabled Americans. These representations illuminate the ideal users and use-cases of these media and work together to

construct the symbolic weight of these media as technologies of control that extend and entrench idealized forms of domesticity. I combine this representational analysis with analyses of material devices, instruction manuals, and reports of user experiences to construct a three-dimensional understanding of realities of smoke detectors and garage door openers as photo-smart technologies of domestic management. By taking the smoke detector off the ceiling and the garage door opener out of the car, we can consider the relationship between the symbolic weight these devices carried and their material frictions when considered in the context of disability and everyday life.

THE SMOKE DETECTOR

Smoke detectors are now-ubiquitous technologies of home governance, required safety devices that are increasingly integrated with digital domestic management platforms such as Nest or Google Home. However, during the 1970s and 1980s, they were heavily marketed consumer technologies that were part of a larger shift in the securitization of the home through mediation. The very packaging of a mid-1980s FamilyGard smoke detector reveals much about the device and its promotion and placement in domestic life. Beside extensive text describing the technology, this reverse side of the box shows an enlarged smoke detector floating above and behind a tableau of a man, woman, and girl positioned as if in a family photo and wearing coordinating red shirts. The lower half of the box features diagrams of a multi-story home and a mobile home, indicating how many detectors are needed and where they should be placed.

Smoke detectors entered a complicated cultural moment in which cigarette smoking was ubiquitous, kitchens were often poorly ventilated, and insurance companies were actively promoting fire insurance to suburban families (Hay 2006; Travelers' Insurance, "Burning House" 1964). Residential fires were substantially more common in the 1960s and 1970s than in subsequent decades (Eisenberg 2005). Even as the U.S. Fire Administration "strongly urge[d] the installation of detectors in homes that do not have them," legal mandates were slow and, in some cases, resisted because of either expense or inconvenience. One apartment dweller, being charged for a detector by his landlord, complained in a letter to the *New York Times* that he "must cease using the following conveniences in order to prevent false alarms: stove, oven, shower, fireplace, ceiling fan and fluorescent desk lamp" (Baron 1982, 22).

To overcome resistance and reach people in areas that did not yet require detectors, manufacturers advertised in magazines and on television. Nearly without exception, 1970s and 1980s smoke detector advertisements centered nuclear families and invoked masculine protection of women and children, reflecting a common pattern of novel and futuristic domestic media continuing to "traffic in regressive narratives about what home is, who should live within it, and what their roles are" (Woods 2024, 54). Captain Kelly smoke detectors were particularly overt, as in an advertisement that described a smoke detector as an "inexpensive way to protect your priceless family" alongside a photo of a man,

woman and child standing in the night staring at a burning house (Gillette 1976). Advertisements further literalized masculine and military protection through the inclusion of a “Captain Kelly” figure, a middle-aged white man wearing a military uniform and looking solemnly ahead. Over a decade later, the FamilyGard box retains these emphases: the rear of the box reads, in part, “Protect your loved ones” and promises that it “uses components that meet U.S. military standards.” Smoke detectors addressed their sales pitch to masculine household decision makers, invoking domestic and national security.

Magazine and newspaper articles that discussed smoke detectors regularly illustrated their installation by showing a man on a ladder installing the device while a woman and one or more children looked on from the floor (see fig. 2). These articles included instructions for installation, comparisons of different models, and advice regarding placement and maintenance. Protection was achieved through this physical installation, further positioning men as protectors not only through purchase but through self-reliant home improvement labor (Cobb and Storm 1978). Even when the placement of such articles in publications like *Women’s Day* or *Better Homes and Gardens* suggested a largely female readership, women and children were routinely presented as vulnerable groups to be protected by a male head of household.

Fires were understood to have differential risks; the FamilyGard box presented information from the National Fire Protection Agency indicating that children under five had a 250% increased risk of death from fire, while adults over 65 had double the average risk of death. This led to significant efforts to educate children, as in public service announcements featuring Daffy Duck talking about fire safety, but did not extend to representing disability, illness, or advanced age in advertisements or articles (Shriners 1990). The domesticity that smoke detectors secured was routinely portrayed in terms of a normative, white, nondisabled, heterosexual nuclear family.

These representations are troubled when considering the material frictions encountered when smoke detectors encountered other bodies and contexts. Smoke detectors were usually housed in white plastic cases, containing space for batteries, and standard detector features included speakers for the alarm, often sounding at over 80 decibels, a test button, and in many cases blinking lights that signaled the device was operational. The most evident frictions stemmed from placement and audio signaling. In terms of placement, detectors were to be installed either on ceilings or high on walls; after installation, routine forms of maintenance such as dusting the sensor, changing the battery, or pushing the

Fig. 2:
Illustration by Alice
Golden for *Women’s Day*
(Cobb and Storm 1978)



test button to ensure operation would also require one to have a way of reaching the elevated device. This placement would create friction for many disabled and elderly people; wheelchair users, people with diminished balance, chronically ill individuals, and others could likely neither install the device themselves nor be proactive in ensuring its continued operation.

A pair of bookended television commercials produced by First Alert offer a rare implicit acknowledgement of and attempt to redress this misfit (*NBC Nightly News* 1988). In the first commercial, a mustached man is seated in a leather recliner; he looks out at the audience, warns of the danger of nonworking detectors, and says “to make sure your family is safe,” pointing at the camera, “go test your smoke detector right now. I’ll be back.” Other commercials follow, enabling viewers to forget the first over the course of two or three minutes, before the man reappears. He gently accuses the viewer—“you didn’t test your smoke detector because it was too inconvenient, right?” He then demonstrates a novel feature of the First Alert detector “with light test”; rather than pressing the button, it can be tested by shining a flashlight at a sensor. This overcomes the friction of placement, building in an accessibility feature that benefits many people. By presenting it as a matter of convenience, a more consumer- and non-disabled-friendly framing, the device was promoted to a mainstream audience without invoking debility directly.

The second obvious friction with respect to disability was the reliance of smoke detectors on audio alarms and warning beeps that signal need for new batteries. These needs were at times addressed through claims of interoperability; Statitrol sold a higher-end model that “accommodates to use of external bells, lights, phone dialers, etc.” (Statitrol Corporation 1972, 5). This means it could, in principle, be linked to other, more accessible or preferred forms of signaling. More direct responses to this misfit can be seen in publications such as the *American Annals of the Deaf*, where readers were presumed to be in the market for alternative versions of this technology. In the back pages of a 1978 issue, an advertisement for the Nationwide Flashing Signals System offers to connect a smoke detector to a lamp or other light inside the home, relaying the signal to convert the alarm to a visual signal, or to exterior horns to alert neighbors (Nationwide 1978).

Beyond efforts to make smoke detectors accessible, these technologies often became foundational to disabled people’s efforts to enhance their own access, convenience, and security by using these as platforms for further “smart” innovation. A catalog from Mid-Audio, a company dedicated to producing “alerting, amplifying, and convenience devices for the hearing impaired” included not only accessible smoke detectors but a wide range of products that modified, integrated, or extended the features of these devices (1983). Strobe lights with audio sensors could be set up to relay not only the sounds of a smoke detector or other alarm, but telephones, children’s cries, or other sonic notifications, and integrated systems were promoted as enabling users to “feel secure” (Mid Audio Inc 1983, 20). Other innovations included haptic signaling, as in a tactile communicator that used radio paging to convert audio signals into vibrations

that could be felt via portable receivers (Cohen 1982). Through efforts to access the security provided by smoke detectors, many features of domestic life were made more accessible in a process that often facilitated an extension of domestic control (or smartness) beyond what was typical in non-disabled households.

THE GARAGE DOOR OPENER

Automated garage door openers were not novel technologies by the late twentieth century, with some early versions on the market as early as the 1920s. However, they proliferated from the 1950s onward, catering to rising rates of home (and garage) ownership in the car-oriented suburbs. The Genie product line from Alliance Manufacturing Company, launched in 1954, was by far the most visible, market-leading version. A garage door opener consists of several parts: a transmitter that, via press of a button, uses a specific frequency to communicate with the receiver installed within the garage, which is itself connected to the opening mechanism. Roughly the size of the palm of a hand, transmitters were designed to be mounted on a car's dashboard or clipped to a visor, turning the car into a medium of home access by allowing remote control of the door.

Garage door openers were frequently marketed through a combination of claims about security and convenience (or luxury). Print advertisements for Genie devices offered to close the garage "when you're safely inside" (fig. 3) or promised "an extra touch of safety in the palm of your hand!" (J. Walter Thompson Company 1979). *The New York Times* described the technologies as "an important safety feature, especially for people who arrive home alone at night" (Gladstone 1981). Coverage of later television advertisements indicated that Genie addressed an audience of men and women 25-54 but "skewed more towards women who are concerned about their safety" (Fox 1989). Garage door openers thus promised to allow people—particularly physically or socially vulnerable people—to enter the safety of the home prior to exiting their car.

Beyond these safety benefits, the garage door opener offered important affordances to people who might lack the strength to physically open their garage, or who might be particularly at

Fig. 3:
Magazine advertisement
for the Genie garage
door opener. J. Walter
Thompson Company
1978. Duke University
Rubenstein Rare Book &
Manuscript Library, Duke
University, Durham, NC.

**Genie opens the door
turns on the light
lets you drive right in!**

Genie
automatic garage door opener system by Alliance

Genie opens the door at a touch of the button! And when you're safely inside, Genie closes the door and turns off the light. Only Genie has CRYPTAR® II Digital Controls, with 3000 codes available. And SEQUENSOR®, the computer-controlled brain that handles 22 functions with error-free precision and solid-state reliability. Isn't it time you owned a Genie?

ALLIANCE Manufacturing Co., Inc., Alliance, Ohio 44601
A Division of American Machine & Foundry Company
Makers of the famous Antenna Rotor®, Alliance Torso-Rotor®, "TV's Better Color Getter"
Genie®, Alliance, Cryptar® and Sequensor® are registered trademarks of The Alliance Manufacturing Company, Inc.

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Fig. 4:
Still from a 1970s
"Genie Remote Control
Garage Door Opener TV
Commercial," produced
by Periscope Films

risk or experiencing physical difficulties or pain when exiting or entering the car repeatedly. A 1970s television commercial illustrated this challenge through paired vignettes (see Figure 6). A young woman drives home with her child as the snow falls heavily around them: without an opener, she exits the car in high heels and struggles to lift the cord attached the garage door; with an opener, she presses the button and smoothly drives into the waiting garage (*Genie Remote Control Garage Door Opener TV Commercial* 1970s). While not depicting debility explicitly, this commercial presented the garage door opener as a solution to diminished capacity, whether caused by weather, attire, age, gender, or a combination of such factors.



Garage door openers offered "convenience, safety, and performance you can count on," a sales pitch reminiscent of many high-end consumer electronics perceived as luxuries (J. Walter Thompson Company 1979). But convenience and luxury were also, often, used against the garage door opener. Humor commentator Andy Rooney installed his first garage door opener and wondered "whether it's a genuine convenience that's worth the money" (1986: B15). He described the agony of opening a garage door in the rain and the ease of the push button but also stated that one reason for his purchase was "laziness" (Rooney 1986: B15). Over time, as the U.S. became increasingly focused on the issue of obesity, garage door openers were regularly decried as an example of frivolous effort-reducing technologies that were "making our waistlines wider" (Mullen 1997).

These critiques of convenience may sound familiar; things that are useful and accessible for disabled people are often dismissed as frivolous, overly expensive, or evidence of laziness, as in the case of precut fruit at the grocery, disposable straws, or escalators (Mauldin 2022). These critiques stem from a limited, normalizing perspective in which all people might be expected to undertake all routine tasks in the same way and with the same degree of ease. Taking a dismediating perspective on the garage door opener during its period of domestication demonstrates that the discourse of safety was potentially more prominent because the backlash to convenience was so evident.

But convenience through “the touch of a button” (J. Walter Thompson Company 1978), also facilitated physically undemanding control-at-a-distance that increased accessibility and allowed the garage door opener to serve as a platform for further accessible innovation (Plotnick 2018). Buttons enable control of our environments without physical exertion; such control is not just convenient but necessary for people for whom the direct manipulation of household media and artifacts is difficult or impossible. Thus, the garage door opener served as a platform for further home control in the name of accessibility. Writing for the *Rehabilitation Gazette*, polio survivor Robert Hitz described how he modified his home to enable him to live alone. Concerned about the possibility of falling while alone, he and friends developed a

rotating beam signal light mounted on the front of my house and actuated by a Genie garage door opener switch which I carry with me, and the signal receiver and a transformer, mounted on the front wall of the upstairs bedroom. One touch of the button in my pocket will turn on the red light and start the beam rotating to attract attention (Hitz 1980, 20).

The garage door opener thus not only enabled control of entrances but was repurposed as a platform for further security and accessibility through repurposing. This is a use of what Arseli Dokumaçi calls “activist affordances,” “through which disabled people *enact* and *bring into being* the worlds that are not already available to them, the worlds they need and wish to dwell in” (2023, 5). Disabled people’s repurposing of domestic media in pursuit of greater and more personalized automation is the very promise of “smart” domesticity.

CONCLUSION

This article has looked at two technologies of home-governance—the smoke detector and the garage door opener—in order to demonstrate the relevance of disability, aging, and other forms of debility and vulnerability to the promotion and operation of these media. Disability informs their symbolic efforts to protect vulnerable individuals, their promises to enhance ease or convenience, and their material affordances and limitations. Disability’s misfit with these devices further illuminates opportunities for innovation that enhanced technological control and enabled independent living—an alternative prehistory to today’s smart home devices.

The relational and overlapping nature of security, convenience, and accessibility has meant that the logics of convenience and security have, at many points in these histories, disguised or overshadowed how domestic media might extend accessibility or restrict disability access. This, in turn, has obstructed the history of disability-led innovation as an alternative prehistory of smart homes and domestic media. Rearticulating these connections is important in ensuring that understandings of smartness and domestic mediation do not continue to center only privileged, idealized users, bodies, and domestic arrangements. Furthermore, it is a necessary corrective; when physical, digital, or datafied affordances are understood primarily as matters of convenience or preference, there is a tendency to overlook or actively erase legacies of accessible innovation, disability activism, and disability rights and communities (Hamraie 2016; Ellcessor 2015). Convenience and accessibility—and security—may overlap but cannot be allowed to collapse.

Looking at the domestication of smoke detectors and garage door openers through a dismediating lens can further inform our understanding of contemporary smart homes, networked devices, and technologies of domestic security and household management. These media were among the first to subject the home to constant surveillance and remote control of entrances; these features have since become normalized and extended into larger technological systems of home-governance via voice controlled or AI systems that purport to handle the security and comfort of the home on behalf of the residents. Their emphases on convenience and security can be read through overlapping logics of accessibility; these devices, intentionally or not, had the effect of making independent living more accessible for many disabled people and formed the basis of many further innovations in accessible domestic technologies, pointing towards an alternative genealogy of smartness. Thus, as we consider contemporary instantiations of home security and convenience, we might ask again how and where disability shapes the possibilities and limits of these media in their meanings and operations. Some may produce surprising benefits while others reinforce regressive or ableist understandings of domesticity—some may do all these things at once.

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