

Form Devices team designs Point as a house sitter

November 22 2014, by Nancy Owano



A Scandinavian team "with an international outlook" and good eye for electronics, software and design aims to reach success with what they characterize as "a softer take" on home security. Their device is one where guests can feel less uncomfortable about keeping surveillance cameras in the home. That is the "point" of Point, a smart house sitter from the startup Form Devices.

Point works by combining sounds with data from its particle detector and sensor array. Point combines the sound and sensor data to let you know if anything is wrong. "We found existing [home security](#) solutions too invasive," said its creators, who think that the home is no place for

[surveillance cameras](#). Engadget reviews editor Jamie Rigg said, "The plain white, palm-sized puck hosts sound, humidity, temperature, air quality and particle sensors, but no camera. This was a very intentional omission, not just because Point is supposed to be small and inconspicuous, but so users have [peace](#) of mind that nobody will ever be watching them."

Instead of a camera, they had a different idea. Point, which connects to the Internet through WiFi, is subtle and small; it fits the size of the palm of a hand and blends in with home surroundings. Except for an annual change of batteries, it requires no interaction. (It should last for more than a year under normal conditions with the included batteries. Regular, replaceable batteries are used.) Point comes with a WiFi chipset and you place it anywhere in the house where your smartphone has WiFi coverage. The team is developing simultaneously on iOS and Android. The Android version of the app is built on a cross-development framework which they should be able to extend to other platforms shortly after launch, they said.

Point comes with speaker and lights to give notifications. Point can notify the user of windows breaking, alarms ringing, or the presence of smoke. Point notices if it's taken down and put in a cupboard. It cannot detect carbon monoxide.

The user can instruct how Point should announce events, glowing yellow, for example, if it detects cigarette smoke or releasing an alarm if windows break. It can light up if there is a loud noise at night. Point's sensor technology allows it to recognize not only common home hazards but also elevated humidity levels in the air. The advantage is that keeping an eye on humidity may help avoid problems with mold and moisture.



Point was created by the team at Form Devices; they are designers and engineers with backgrounds from the Nordic telecom giants and Apple in California and they have turned to Kickstarter to move their Point device forward. The targeted shipping date is July next year. A \$79 pledge gets one Point, with estimated delivery in July 2015.

Writing in New Scientist, Chris Baraniuk said Point looks like a wall-mounted smoke alarm but [packs](#) an acoustic sensor that measures

background noise. CNN's Heather Kelly thought Point "looks like a traditional smoke alarm [crossed](#) with a speaker."

TechCrunch pointed out that the device processes all [sound](#) right on the device, ensuring no audio is uploaded to the cloud. Instead, this is a device that "simply listens for unusual things and sends out a notification, not the actual data."

More information: [www.kickstarter.com/projects/8 ... ake-on-home-security](http://www.kickstarter.com/projects/8...ake-on-home-security)

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