

Soft shine, smart functions in launch of Sony light

January 15 2016, by Nancy Owano



Home living in Japan is to take on a new light. Sony has answered the question: What if the lightbulb in your home could control almost everything else?

Sony has introduced its Multifunction Light, which provides lighting and also acts as smart hub of the home. Said Leo Lutero in *PSFK*: "instead of just flashing multi-colored LEDS to a beat, it boasts features far more important to the modern, connected home."

Steve Dent in *Engadget* said that it can even deliver "a full spectrum of

light to match your mood." Dent talked about all the other things it can do, including how "it can detect when you're in the room and turn on the TV or air [conditioning](#)."

One can use the Multifunctional Light to play music. Control the thermostat. Take on the role of between-rooms intercom. Turn the TV on and off. And more. Leo Lutero in *PSFK* said, "this means you won't ever have to worry about leaving appliances turned on when you leave the room." Sony launched the light which connects with a smartphone, and one can control timers and remotely turn home devices on and off.

It can even record and play back messages. "You can program all of those features in infinite ways via the app," said Dent.

How it works: Farrha Khan in *TechRadar* said it operates via "a whole bunch of [sensors](#), including sensors for motion, humidity, luminance and temperature, as well as an infrared controller, speakers, a microphone and even a slot for a microSD card."

Lutero: "A ring radiates the [light](#) giving a soft, engulfing shine to the room. This is the lighting half that comes in two variants: 53 or 42 watts." He said an indirect lighting unit within the ring produces hues in RGB full [color](#).

"To some extent," said JC Torres in *SlashGear*, "it's almost like Amazon's Echo, but without Alexa and [hanging](#) from the ceiling." Nick Statt of *The Verge* also saw some resonance with Amazon's Echo.

"Basically, the company packed the technology inside Amazon's Echo speaker into a lightbulb that fits into a flying saucer-shaped housing unit. If that sounds silly, just take a look at how the Echo and Amazon's Alexa digital assistant are increasingly taking over smart homes here in the US by performing the basic needs of a voice-powered central [hub](#)."

The product is to be released this year in Japan.

In the bigger picture, this Sony Multifunctional Light is part of what hardware and software engineers see as opportunities to innovate for the so-called smart home.

Julia Pyper in *Greentech Media*, for example, reported on NXP announcing "a suite of new production-ready modules and reference designs for [smart lighting](#), smoke detection, and a variety of other smart home applications. These new products are outfitted with best-in-class algorithms for [voice](#) activation that work with most third-party speech recognition software partners."

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