

Lighthouse: Home monitor is one smart sentry

24 February 2018, by Nancy Owano



A smart home device that serves as a security camera delivers service that goes beyond house sentry. What if you find a home device that not only acts as sentry but does double duty as private investigator/concierge/babysitter?

A [smart home](#) security device takes on added roles. *TechRadar* is one of numerous sites now picking up on how the Lighthouse not only uses 3-D scanning but also machine learning.

You get a [camera](#) that can learn patterns and respond to natural speech.

TechRadar's "smart [home](#)" writer Andrew London said Lighthouse AI, the company behind the camera, built it "with AI as its starting [point](#)."

The home device knows the difference between your dog and your dog walker. It knows when an unexpected person is on the scene.

"We developed a camera that can differentiate between pets, people and shadows; that learns family members by face and can pull up video clips by name; and that will alert you when the dog

walker arrives, but also if your elderly parents aren't in the kitchen by a certain time each day. We created a new conduit through which busy people can connect and interact with their households," Alex Teichman, CEO, said.

London gave one example: "What time did my kids get home yesterday?" The camera responds by showing you the relevant footage. Timelapse videos automatically skip past periods of inactivity, and the user can go straight to the desired action for viewing.

A [camera sensor](#) can deliver a 1080p live stream; a microphone and speaker can carry the two-way audio; and it has a security siren. As for the 3-D sensor it can monitor movement.

You can use a smartphone to receive alerts and view live camera footage. Reuters said users can ask the device's accompanying smart phone app questions like, "Show me video of the dog" or "Send me an alert if the kids aren't home from school by 4 p.m. on [weekdays](#)."

The site said it is 1.6 lbs (731g); 8.5" (217mm) tall x 3.4" (87mm) diameter.

Lighthouse is available now in the US at \$299.

Pricing is \$299 for the camera itself, plus \$10 a month service plan. A one-time \$200 service fee is a service option, plus there is a wall mount priced at \$29.

A visit to their site reveals how much car-driving tech figured into making Lighthouse. Alex Teichman, CEO, blogged about the influence from his background and that of CTO and Co-founder Hendrik Dahlkamp.

"As you may know, Hendrik and I both come from computer vision backgrounds: Hendrik was part of the winning team of the DARPA Grand Challenge,

and I worked on perception systems for [self-driving cars](#). It was because of our work in these fields that we became inspired to develop and deploy these technologies to give our physical spaces useful and accessible [intelligence](#)— starting with the home."

Teichman and Dahlkamp had been working on self-driving cars since 2005, said Reuters.

Jared Newman in *Fast Company* noted its 3-D depth sensor "to help distinguish between people, pets, children, and shadows."

Custom optics for a time-of-flight camera measures the 3-D structure of the environment. The custom optical module features the 3-D time-of-flight sensor which measures the time it takes for emitted light to return to Lighthouse after bouncing off objects in the environment, producing a continuously updating 3-D model of the scene.

Newman commented that it is the only camera with a "time of flight" sensor, building a 3-D map of a room by sending out diffuse light and timing reflections back to the camera.

"This helps Lighthouse identify moving objects and screen out things that shouldn't trigger a security alert, such as pets and lighting [changes](#). (I don't have any pets with which to test this, but Lighthouse never alerted me to movement that didn't involve humans.)"

Personal [Tech](#) columnist Edward Baig, *USA Today*, tested it out for several days: the results you get vary depending on how you ask the question, he said, and Lighthouse could be better still in how it processes your natural language requests. Overall, he said he was "more impressed than not."

More information: www.light.house/

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APA citation: Lighthouse: Home monitor is one smart sentry (2018, February 24) retrieved 17 January 2022 from <https://techxplore.com/news/2018-02-lighthouse-home-smart-sentry.html>

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