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UPDATED

The best smart garage door controllers deliver convenience and peace of mind

Even if you use your garage only as an oversized storage locker, you'll wonder how you ever got along without a smart controller for your existing garage door opener.



By Christopher Null
Freelance Contributor, TechHive | JUL 21, 2020 6:00 AM PDT



The garage door opener, in some ways, marks the smart home's genesis. Radio-controlled remotes for electric garage door openers date back to 1931, predating the TV remote by nearly 20 years. So, it's funny that modern smart home technology, which ties wireless with internet-based technology, has been relatively slow to reach the garage door. Relatively few companies compete in this market today, and many of their products feel designed more for guys who like to tinker in their workshops than folks looking to develop a soup-to-nuts smart home.

The good news is that these devices are definitely improving in both simplicity and capability, and while the garage door might remain a bit of an outlier in your smart home for the foreseeable future, adding a smart garage door controller to your setup offers some real advantages. Not only will you be able to open and shut the door from anywhere—letting in guests, relatives, or delivery people—you'll also know whether the door is open or closed in real time.


Updated July 21, 2020 to add our news story about Vivint Smart Home integrating Chamberlain's myQ Smart Garage Door Controller into its professionally installed smart home product line.

If you're one of those people who frequently forget to close the door—or if you fret over whether you remembered to shut it as you headed out on a two-week road trip—you'll definitely want to make the investment.

Here's our top pick in this market, followed by a list of features you should consider when shopping for a smart garage door controller, and links to our reviews of other products in this category.

[Further reading: The best video doorbells]

Best smart garage door controller



Chamberlain myQ Smart Garage Door Hub (MYQ-G030I)

★★★★ Read TechHive's review





\$24.95 See It

on Amazon

This top-notch smart garage door controller can handle two doors at once—although that second sensor costs three times as much as the entire single-door kit.

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This is a real no-brainer: The Chamberlain myQ is the easiest smart garage door controller to set up, the most functional controller on the market, and, it's the least expensive on the market—by a wide margin. The all-wireless system

means you don't have to tinker with running new wiring to your garage door opener, and a single Hub can control two doors (if you buy a second sensor—which costs about as much as the hub-and-sensor kit). The app is simple to configure and use, and the system supports a small but growing number of smart home ecosystems, including HomeKit. The myQ isn't compatible with every opener, but if it works with yours—[check online before you buy](#)—it's definitively the one to get.

How to pick the right smart garage door controller

While garage door openers come in a vast range of brands, styles, and capabilities, the good news is that you'll likely be able to find a smart controller that works with your system without much trouble.

As I mentioned above, the Chamberlain myQ is my top pick for a variety of reasons, but because it exclusively relies on wireless technology, it isn't compatible with every system on the market. To start, visit [myQ's compatibility tool](#) and check whether your existing opener is supported. If it is, and you don't care that it's not compatible with Alexa or Samsung SmartThings, your work is done: Get the myQ. If it isn't, you can either get an all-new opener as Chamberlain suggests (although that won't resolve the Alexa and SmartThings issues), or delve into the world of *wired* smart garage door controllers.



The Nexx NXG-200 must be attached to your garage door opener via wires, and space can be tight depending on your ceiling height.



Actually, upgrading your old, incompatible door opener is not a terrible idea, and new models are more secure and less expensive than you might think. Considering that a wired garage door controller can run you about \$100, it's worth thinking hard about whether you want to pour more money into an outdated system that might be close to failure, or just upgrade it from the start. (Many new openers have smart technology built in, obviating the need for an add-on controller.)

But if you do have an opener that's incompatible with our top pick, and you want to keep it around, you'll need a wired controller like the Nexx Garage NXG-200 or the Garadget. Wired controllers. These must be connected to the opener via a pair of wires, so you'll need to be comfortable with some minor electrical work in order to install them. Like myQ, Nexx offers an [online compatibility tool](#), but here you're likely to find that Nexx is either compatible straight out of the box, or compatible only with an additional adapter. In other words, wired controllers are generally compatible with everything, or, at least, I haven't found any openers yet that *aren't* compatible with them.



The Garadget fires a laser once a second at the door to determine whether it is open or closed. As with the product from NEXX, the Garadget must be hardwired to your opener.



The catch involves the adapter. Generally speaking, if you have an older garage door opener, Nexx and Garadget will work with it straight out of the

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box. If you have a newer opener, you'll need their adapter as well. This is because newer openers often have a more complex encryption system built in, and a standard push-button remote—which is what wired smart controllers emulate—won't work with them. The solution is to place a button that is compatible with this encryption in between the controller and the opener: The controller tells the button to activate, which in turn tells the opener to open or close. It's a little wonky, but in my testing, these setups work just as well as the wireless alternative.

The problem is that it's just a lot more expensive to do it this way. Purchasing a Nexx and an adapter will run you \$105 at press time, and a Garadget plus adapter costs \$98. Compare that to the less than \$40 you'll spend on the myQ and there's really no choice.

Again, if myQ isn't compatible, either Nexx or Garadget will make for an acceptable alternative, provided you're willing to spend a little extra to get the job done. We'll review new products in this space as they come to market and will update our top pick as warranted.

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AT A GLANCE

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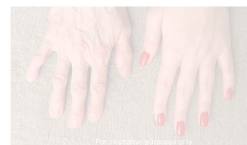
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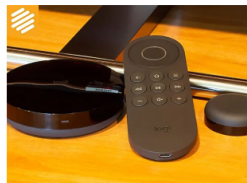
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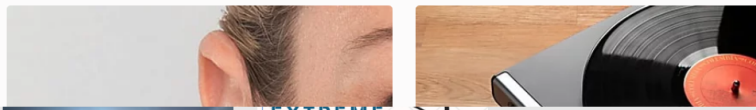
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