



## **Mobile Home Security Solutions: Starter Guide**

*A detailed look at interactive security solutions, applications and technologies*

## **Table of Contents**

3	Market Landscape: Technology Drives Changes in Consumer Behavior
4	Mobile Home Security Capabilities
6	Mobile Solutions and You—Practical Applications
7	How the Technologies Work
7	Interactive Security Purchasing Tips
10	Company Overview
10	About the Author

# Market Landscape: Technology Drives Changes in Consumer Behavior

**[Mobile home security solutions](#) are on the rise and quickly gaining mainstream adoption.** With the right technology, homeowners can access and control their security systems remotely from their desktops or smartphones, providing added peace of mind and convenience, wherever they are.



Forgot to activate your system before leaving? No worries. Log in from your phone to turn it on, instead of turning the car around. Wondering if your kids made it home from school or if your pet is behaving? Simply pull up your home security cameras online. These are just a few examples of what is possible.

Thanks to technology advancements and lifestyle benefits, demand for mobile security capabilities is higher than ever. In fact, our partner Alarm.com [surpassed one million interactive users in 2012](#) and [reports 75% of remote access events are through its mobile app](#). At Vector Security, we credit this trend to three primary trends:

- The rise of smartphones and tablets.
- The demise of landline phones.
- The availability of cost-effective, convenient solutions.

## 1. The Rise of Smartphones and Tablets

Consumers have grown accustomed to information at the swipe of their thumb, as adoption of smartphones and tablets continues to skyrocket. This is evidenced by recent data from [Cisco Systems](#):

- Smartphone usage grew 81% in 2012.
- In 2017, there will be 5.2 billion mobile device users, compared to 4.3 billion in 2012.
- Worldwide data traffic is expected to grow 13-fold by 2017.
- 66% of global mobile data traffic by 2017 will result from video.
- Average network speeds will increase 7-fold by 2017.

Tablets have seen similar successes. Analyst firm [IDC predicts](#) that in 2013, 190.9 million tablets will be shipped, and by 2017, shipments will reach 350 million.

This upward trend in mobile device ownership has had a profound impact on the way that people communicate and manage their daily lives. It is now commonplace to chat with friends, play games, shop, manage bank accounts and more via mobile devices.

Home security is no exception.

Mobile management of home security accounts is becoming a must-have for many consumers, as it eliminates the hassle traditionally associated with remembering to arm and disarm the system. While home security adoption rates are currently at 20%, industry executives expect interactive and mobile features could move the market closer to 30%, according to a March 2013 [USA Today article](#).

## 2.The Demise of Landline Phones



One result of mass-market mobile phone adoption is that less people are using traditional landline phones than ever before. As of June 2102, approximately [one in every three households did not have a landline phone](#). In addition, [The Economist](#) predicts that landlines will become obsolete sometime in 2025.

As landlines slide into obscurity, there has been a shift to wireless security systems that use cellular technology to relay messages. Readily available from top security providers, these systems are often more reliable, convenient and accessible, than their landline-counterparts—with built-in mobile capabilities.

## 3.Cost-Effective Mobile Solutions

With strides in technology, video surveillance webcams, broadband connectivity and phones themselves have become more cost-effective. Drops in prices enable greater mass-market adoption, giving people the tools needed for remote security management. While actual costs vary based on the sophistication of your home security system, baseline mobile capabilities are [available for \\$30-\\$60 per month](#).

## Mobile Home Security Capabilities

Mobile home security systems provide an array of added capabilities that your standard system lacks. A few of our customers' favorites include remote access, streaming video, location-based services, real-time alerts and home automation.

## Remote Access

The most basic capability provided by interactive services is remote access, or the ability to arm and disarm your system, configure alerts, watch video footage and view activity histories, from your computer, smartphone or tablet. Check in while at work or traveling, or even from your couch, to make sure everything is as it should be.

## Streaming Video

Another incredibly popular feature is streaming online video. Did you get an alert that there's suspicious movement in your backyard? Pull up the video to determine if it's a real threat or just the neighbor's dog on the loose. Gone for a week traveling? Do a quick video sweep of your home to make sure everything is in order and okay.

Streaming video extends beyond pure security benefits though, offering lifestyle benefits as well. Remotely check in on kids, elderly parents, pets, babysitters, contractors and the like—all from your smartphone or computer.

## Real-Time Alerts

Based on the triggers you set up, receive email, SMS and phone alerts in real time as activities transpire. For example, receive notification any time your safe, garage door, liquor cabinet or gun closet is accessed, so you can take appropriate action as needed.



## Location-Based Services

Sync the global positioning system (GPS) in your phone with your security system and an added layer of opportunities arises. Perhaps, you want your security system to arm anytime you are more than five miles away or to disarm when you're 500 feet away. No problem; location-based services give you this capability using [geo-fences](#).

## Home Automation

Interactive services give you the power to automate your home's heating and cooling, outdoor lighting and more. Put your lights on timers so that they turn on and off when you're away to ward off burglars. Have your thermostat go lower when you're at work or asleep. Trigger the hall light to turn on inside the home when you're garage door opens so you don't have to enter a dark home. The possibilities are open to your imagination.

## Mobile Solutions and You—Practical Applications

Wondering how all of this can work together to make day-to-day life safer and more convenient? Consider the hypothetical Smith family, and how they use the system:

- 8 a.m. — Mrs. Smith rushes off to drop the kids off at school and head into work, realizing too late that she forgot to arm her security system prior to leaving. She quickly logs in via her smartphone to activate.
- 8:30 a.m. — The house thermostat automatically adjusts to a cooler temperature, knowing everybody has left for the morning.
- 12:00 p.m. — While eating lunch, Mr. Smith checks in on his mom via streaming video. She's 89 years old and lives by herself; luckily, she too has an interactive security system in place. She's happily watching the Price is Right and enjoying a sandwich.
- 2:00 p.m. — The house thermostat automatically adjusts to a higher temperature, knowing the kids should be home from school shortly.
- 2:30 p.m. — Mrs. Smith logs into the system to unlock the front door to let the babysitter into the home. She relocks the door once the sitter is safely inside.
- 3 p.m. — Mrs. Smith gets a text message that her front door has opened. She switches to her video surveillance camera to watch online as her kids safely walk in the door from school.
- 5 p.m. — Mrs. Smith returns home from work. As she opens the garage door, the garage lights automatically turn on. Mr. Smith returns home shortly after.
- 8 p.m. — While watching their nightly TV shows, Mr. Smith realizes that they never reactivated the alarm system after coming home from work. He does so during a commercial break, without leaving the couch.
- 10 p.m. — The house thermostat automatically adjusts to cooler temperature as the family settles in for the night.
- 11 p.m. — Mrs. Smith turns off the downstairs light from her bedroom using her smartphone, realizing they accidentally left it on when they went upstairs.
- 11:30 p.m. — The family sleeps soundly, knowing that an alarm will sound if any threats arise.

Using their home security system, the Smiths used security and monitoring capabilities to ensure those they love are safe, while gaining the added benefits of energy management and home automation. The result is a security system that syncs perfectly with their lifestyle, while it eliminates headaches and worries, cuts down on utility bills, and makes daily activities easier.



## How the Technologies Work

The technology that makes mobile monitoring possible is pretty straightforward. It starts with an assessment of your home and security needs. Findings from this consultation drive recommendations for sensor and camera placement throughout your home.

For some, basic monitoring of main doors and windows is sufficient; others prefer full-home surveillance. A home security specialist can work with you to determine the proper layout of your system based on your home's configuration and security goals.

Once sensors and cameras are in place and armed, data is transmitted to a central panel in your home and then over the Internet. Because it's stored online, you're able to access security intelligence anywhere with an Internet connection—be that your desktop, smartphone or tablet.

You can also configure real-time alerts to notify you via text, email or phone call for pre-set triggers. For instance, maybe you'd like a text message every time your garage door opens, but a phone call if your safe has been accessed.

In addition to real-time access online by homeowners, data is shared with a central monitoring station. In the case of a real threat, the operator can dispatch help immediately, as well as call your personal emergency contacts.

## Interactive Security Purchasing Tips

Sold on the benefits of interactive home security, and looking to purchase? We've got you covered. Following is a 7-point checklist to help you compare vendors.

### 1. Secure, Password-Protected Apps

While mobile solutions have ample benefits, they also expose you to additional security risks if proper precautions aren't taken. With access to security data on computers, smartphones and tablets, it's critical to password protect this personal information in case your phone is lost or stolen. The best providers will have this functionality built right into their apps.

### 2. 24-Hour Security Monitoring

Look for providers that offer 24/7 monitoring services. This way, if you're unavailable or miss an alert, someone else has your back—no matter the time of day. A monitoring service will notify police or fire stations in the case of an emergency. When evaluating monitoring stations, consider also:

- **Guaranteed uptime and reliability:** What back-up capabilities and disaster recovery systems does it have in place in case of a power outage, telephone service interruption or data breach? How is continuous monitoring ensured?
- **UL approval:** Underwriters Laboratories is an independent company that tests technologies to ensure they meet safety and reliability requirements. Make sure your monitoring center has gotten their stamp of approval.
- **In-house versus outsourced support:** Some security companies will outsource their monitoring services to a third party. Understand whether this is the case, and if so, do a background check on both providers to make sure they are up to par.

### 3. Intuitive Interface

Ask to demo the security provider's app prior to purchasing. Evaluate the ease of use and functionality of the interface. Does it give you the capabilities to monitor your home in the way you want? Is it intuitive and simple to navigate?

In addition to test-driving the app, do a quick search for other consumer reviews to get a sense of overall satisfaction levels.

### 4. Device Compatibility

Although it may seem obvious, double check that the provider's mobile solutions are compatible with your device(s). Is the app available for the iPhone, iPad, Android, etc., and is there an additional cost associated with downloading it?

### 5. Full-Service Solution

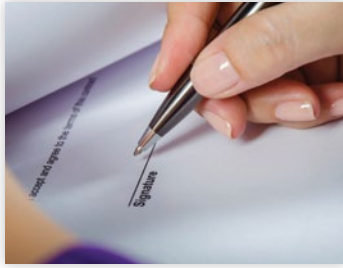
Respected providers will offer full-service solutions that span [intrusion, fire and environmental hazard monitoring](#). To do this effectively, providers offer a range of sensor options (door, window, motion, fire/smoke, flood, garage, etc.) and cameras (indoor, outdoor, dome, bullet, etc.), which are integrated to meet your unique needs.

To guarantee that a system is right for you, base it on an assessment of your property, lifestyle and security essentials. Steer clear of the cookie-cutter approach, and you'll receive a system designed perfectly to keep your home and family safe.





## 6. Clear Contract and Agreement



Marketing gimmicks abound in the home security market; you may think you're paying one thing but really being charged much more. Don't fall for misleading advertising or get trapped in a contract you don't want to be in. When reviewing your home security agreement, look closely at the following:

- Cancellation terms: Can you get out of the contract if unhappy with services? What is the process for doing so? Will a cancellation fee be applied?
- Commitment: How long is the contract valid? Does it automatically renew? What do you need to do if you don't want it to renew?
- Cost breakdown: How much money is going toward equipment versus monitoring costs? Are there set up or ongoing maintenance fees? Can rates increase over the contract period or are they locked in?
- Ownership: Who owns the equipment? Is it a rental or purchasing agreement? What product warranties are in place?
- Transfer: Can services be transferred to another home or property if you move? Will this incur a fee?

## 7. Quality Service and Support

Lastly, understand the level of support you will receive—in terms of system maintenance and upkeep. Free maintenance isn't necessarily part of your package, so look for hidden fees here.

In addition, evaluate response times. Is there a support phone line available? How quick can they get someone onsite? Are there only certain days of the week or times that service visits are performed? The more timely and quality service, the better.

## Thank You!

Thank you for downloading our Mobile Home Security Starter Guide; we hope you found it valuable as you evaluate your security options.

To discuss your unique security needs, [schedule a complimentary consultation](#) with one of our specialists today.

## Company Overview

For more than 40 years, Vector Security, Inc. ([www.vectorsecurity.com](http://www.vectorsecurity.com)) has been a premier provider of intelligent security solutions tailored to the needs of the customer. Headquartered in Pittsburgh, the company offers a full suite of electronic security services for residential, business and national account customers across North America and the Caribbean through a network of branches and authorized dealers.



Vector Security is a sister company of the Philadelphia Contributionship, a private insurance company founded in 1752, and currently provides cost-effective, technology-based security solutions to more than 260,000 homes and businesses.

Subscribe to Vector Security's Intelligent Security blog for industry insight or news, connect with the company on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [LinkedIn](#) and [Google+](#).



### About the Author

[Rick Simpson](#) | Vice President of Technical Services

As Vice President of Technical Services, Rick Simpson is active in industry associations, acting as chairman of the Electronic Security Association (ESA) Standards and Fire Life Safety Committee as well as principal of the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 72 Household Fire Committee representing the Central Station Alarm Association (CSAA). When he's not lobbying for the industry or the safety of consumers, you'll most likely find Rick on the golf course or listening to his favorite music. He resides in Downingtown, PA with his wife and three dogs.