Chapter 38 of the Society of Broadcast Engineers
SBE
EL PASO - LAS CRUCES - JUAREZ

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NEWS

What's the Matter?

We Explain the New Smart Home Standard

The open source standard called Matter makes sure that your devices play nicely. Here's how it could change how you shop for and use them.

THE IDEAL SMART home seamlessly anticipates your needs and instantly responds to commands. You shouldn't have to open a specific app for each appliance or remember the precise voice command and voice assistant combination that starts the latest episode of your favorite podcast on the nearest speaker. Competing smart home standards make operating your devices needlessly complicated. It's just not very … well, smart.

Tech giants try to straddle standards by offering their voice assistants as a controlling layer on top, but Alexa can't talk to Google Assistant or Siri or control Google or Apple devices, and vice versa. And so far, no single ecosystem has created all the best devices. But that may be changing. Formerly called Project CHIP (Connected Home over IP), the open source interoperability standard known as Matter will finally launch later this year. Some of the biggest tech names have signed on, like Amazon, Apple, and Google, which means that seamless integration may finally be within reach.

You may also want to read our guides to the Best Smart Speakers or the Best Smart Lights, and our guide to setting up your smart home.

What Is Matter?

Matter promises to enable different devices and ecosystems to play nicely. Device manufacturers will comply to the Matter standard to ensure their devices are compatible with smart home and voice services such as Amazon's Alexa, Apple's Siri, Google's Assistant, and others. For folks building a smart home, Matter should enable you to buy any device and use the voice assistant or platform you prefer to control it.

The first protocol will run on Wi-Fi and Thread network layers and use Bluetooth Low Energy for device setup. While it will support various platforms, you will have to choose the voice assistants and apps you want to use. There is no central Matter app or assistant.

What Makes Matter Different?

The Connectivity Standards Alliance (or CSA, formerly the Zigbee Alliance) maintains the Matter standard. What sets it apart is the breadth of its membership, the willingness to adopt and merge disparate technologies, and that it is an open source project.

When the software development kit is ready, interested companies can use it royalty-free to incorporate their devices into the Matter ecosystem. Growing out of the Zigbee Alliance gives Matter a firm foundation. Bringing the main smart home platforms (Amazon Alexa, Apple HomeKit, Google Home, and Samsung SmartThings) to the same table is an achievement. While it is optimistic to imagine a seamless adoption of Matter across the board, it has enjoyed a rush of enthusiasm with a wave of smart home brands signing up, including August, Schlage, and Yale in smart locks; Belkin, Cync, GE Lighting, Sengled, Signify (Philips Hue), and Nanoleaf in smart lighting; and others like Arlo, Comcast, Eve, and LG. There are more than 240 member companies in all.

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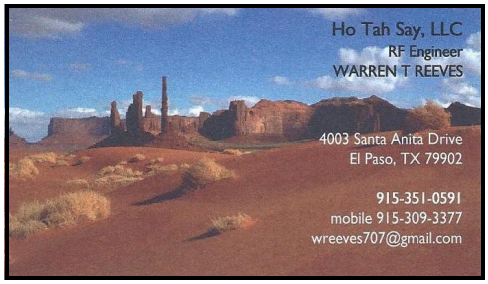

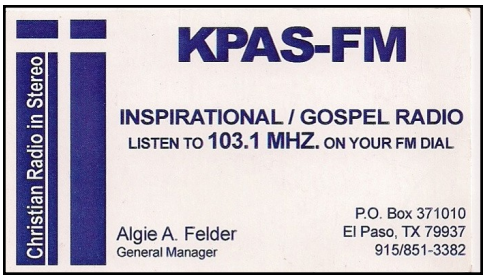

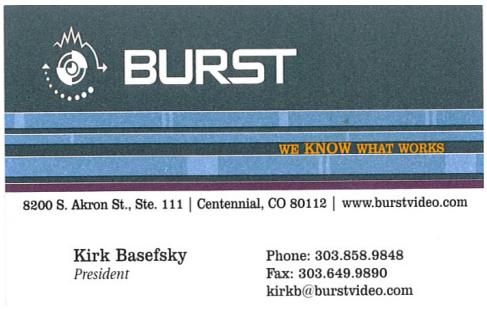

When Will Matter Arrive?

Matter has been in the works for years. The first release was due in late 2020, but it was delayed to the following year, rebranded as Matter, and then touted for this summer. Now it has been delayed again until the fall. There's always a chance of further delays.

The CSA says the latest delay was to accommodate more devices and platforms and ensure they all will work smoothly with one another before release. More than 130 devices and sensors across 16 development platforms (OS's and chipsets) are working through certification, and there will be more come the fall.

If the specification does arrive this fall, more companies can apply for Matter certification, and we could see the second wave of smart locks, smart bulbs, and security sensors in time for the holidays. Assuming the release goes well, we expect several other smart home brands to climb aboard.

What About Other Smart Home Standards?

The road to smart home nirvana is paved with different standards, like Zigbee, Z-Wave, Samsung SmartThings, Wi-Fi HaLow, and Insteon, to name a few. These protocols and others will continue to exist and operate. Google will merge its Thread and Weave technologies into Matter. The new standard also employs Wi-Fi and Ethernet standards and uses Bluetooth LE for device setup.

Matter is not a single technology and should evolve and improve over time. It won't cover every possible use case for every device and scenario, so other standards will continue to develop. The more platforms and standards merge with Matter, the greater its potential to succeed, but the challenge of making it all work seamlessly also grows.

go to Page 5

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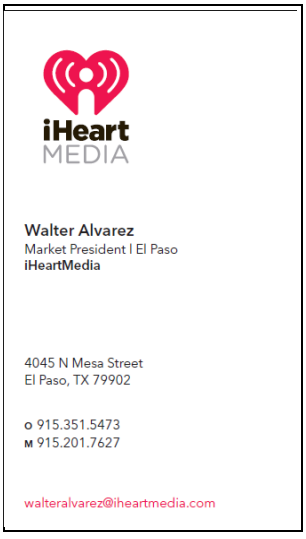


EL PASO, TX SBE CHAPTER 38 MEETING MINUTE

DATE 3/08/2022 LOCATION: ZOOM (Antonio's)

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER: 11:00 AM, BY ANTONIO CASTRO. THERE WERE 15 (FIFTHTEEN) ATTENDANTS

REPORT OF THE SECRETARY: MINUTES IN THE MARCH NEWSLETTER. ACCEPTED BY DAVID HALPERIN, SECONDED BY MARIO TELLEZ

REPORT OF THE TREASURER: $ 5167.54 IN THE BANK , ACCEPTED BY MARIO TELLEZ, SECONDED BY DAVID HALPERIN.

REPORT OF THE CERTIFICATION COMMITTEE: NO REPORT

REPORT OF THE MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE: DAVID GRICE OFFER TO HAVE HIS ALAMOGORDO RADIO STATIONS GROUP AS SUSTAINING MEMBER. WILL SEND HIN THE PAPERWORK.

REPORT OF THE FREQUENCY COORDINATOR COMMITTEE: NO REPORT.

REPORT OF THE SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE: REMINDER TO INVITE APPLICANTS FOR THE $1K SCHOLARSHIP. APPLICATION IS POSTED IN OUR WEBSITE TIL THE END OF MARCH. RICK VILARDELL RE-SENT TO SEVERAL HIGH SCHOOLS.

REPORT OF THE WEBSITE COMMITTEE: NOW 3573 VS. 3450 EQUAL 23 HITS. LOOKING GOOD.

REPORT OF THE EAS CHAIRMAN: TEXAS MONTHLY TEST WAS FINE. NEW MEXICO TO TEST IT ON FRIDAY THE 12th

REPORT OF THE PROGRAM COMMITTEE: BE AWARE THAT IN MAY, A ROAD SHOW WILL COME TO EL PASO.

NEW BUSINESS OR ANY ITEMS FOR THE CHAPTER INTEREST: NONE

.

OTHER NONE

NEXT MEETING DATE AND LOCATION: APRIL 12, ZOOM FROM ANTONIO AT 11 AM

MEETING ADJOURNED : 11:24 AM.

FOR THOSE THAT DIDN'T COVER THEIR CHAPTER MEMBERSHIP FEES, ANY TIME IS A GOOD TIME TO DO IT. REMINDERS WILL BE SENT IN THE NEXT DAYS.

APRIL PROGRAM

FOR LAST MONTH OF MARCHG, WE DID NOT HAVE A PRESENTATION , JUST THE REEGULAR CHAPTER MONTHLY MEETING

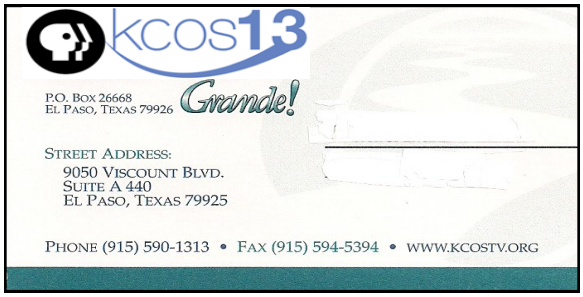
NOW, FOR THIS APRIL MONTH WE ARE NOT GOING TO HAVE ANY PRESENTATION. ONLY OUR REGULAR CHAPTER MEETING, FACE TO FACE.

WHEN: APRIL 12, 2022

WHERE: ZOOM FROM ANTONIO'S

TIME: WINDOW OPENS AT 10:30 AM FOR WELCOMING AND INFORMAL CHAT, AND THEN AT 11 AM WE DO OUR CHAPTER MEETING.

PLEASE TRY TO ATTEND AND DISCUSS ANYT MATTER. THANK YOU



Will Matter Work With Existing Devices?

Some devices will work with Matter after a firmware update. Others won't ever be compatible. There's no simple answer here. While many devices that currently work with Thread, Z-Wave, or Zigbee should be able to work with Matter, it's not a given that they will get upgrades. It is best to check in with manufacturers about specific devices and future support.

The first specification, or Matter 1.0, covers only certain categories of devices, like:

- Light bulbs and switches
- Smart plugs
- Smart locks
- Smart blinds and shades
- Garage door controllers
- Thermostats

HVAC controllers

Security cameras and doorbells, robot vacuums, and other devices will probably be covered in a later specification.

How Do Smart Home Hubs Fit In?

To achieve compatibility with Matter, some brands, like Philips Hue, are updating their hubs. It is one way to sidestep the problem of incompatible older hardware. Updating hubs to work with the new Matter standard enables you to connect older systems, which will demonstrate that standards can coexist. But getting the full potential benefit of Matter will often require new hardware. Once you adopt the system, you should be able to get rid of hubs altogether.

The underlying Thread technology in Matter allows devices, like smart speakers or lights, to act as Thread routers and create a mesh network that can pass data, increasing range and reliability. Unlike traditional smart home hubs, these Thread routers can't see inside the packets of data they exchange. Data can be sent securely end-to-end by a network of devices from different manufacturers.

What About Security and Privacy?

Fears about security and privacy have cropped up frequently on the smart home scene. Matter is designed to be secure, but we won't know how secure until it is working in the real world. The CSA has published a set of security and privacy principles. Data collection and sharing will still be between you and the device manufacturer or platform provider.

Where before you had a single hub to secure, Matter devices will mostly connect directly to the internet. That makes them potentially more susceptible to hackers and malware. But Matter also provides for local control, so the command from your phone or smart display doesn't have to go through a cloud server. It can pass directly to the device on your home network.

Will Manufacturers and Platforms Limit Functionality?

While the big platform providers can see the benefit in a common standard, they are not going to open up full control of their devices to their competitors. There will be a gap between the walled garden ecosystem experience and Matter functionality. Manufacturers will also keep certain features proprietary.

For example, you may be able to turn an Apple device on or off with a Google Assistant voice command, but you will have to use Siri or an Apple app to tweak some settings or access advanced features. Manufacturers signing up to Matter are under no obligation to implement the entire specification, so the extent of support is likely to be mixed.

Will Matter Succeed?

Matter is presented as a smart home panacea, but only time will tell. Few, if any, innovations get everything right out of the gate. But there is potential value in seeing a Matter logo on a device and knowing it will work with your existing smart home setup, particularly in households with iPhones, Android phones, and Alexa devices. The freedom to be able to mix and match your devices and voice assistants is enticing.

No one wants to have to choose devices based on compatibility. We want to choose devices with the best feature set, the highest quality, and the most desirable designs. Hopefully, Matter will make that easier.