



USABILITY TESTING AT MISSOURI S&T

A Smart Home Lab

Dr. David Wright of English and Technical Communication and Dr. Daniel Shank of Psychological Sciences are currently conducting a usability study for smart home devices. Thanks to a seed grant from the Center for Science, Technology, and Society, they have been able to construct a mock living room in a lab that replicates a living environment. Various smart devices have been installed, including the Google Nest Hub, a thermostat, smart television, tunable lighting, cameras, doorbell, and door locks. Using the Nest hub, voice commands, or cell phone apps, those devices can be controlled individually or in assignable groups.

The team, which also includes students Thomas Yarbrough, Matthew Dew and Charnise Anderson, hope to investigate how user-friendly the devices are and how well they work in conjunction with one another. According to Dr. Wright, "There have been many advances in this technology since we started working with it four years ago, but it's still very much a work in progress. This will be the first time we've been able to actively observe people using the technology, so it's an important step forward for us."

Previously, Wright and Shank conducted research with similar technology at the Solar Village.