OMNI / HMS / AEGIS CONVERSION FAQ
6/30/2020

Q. I have an HAI Leviton Omni (Or OnQ HMS or Aegis, brand of Controller. Is it obsolete?
    A. Yes, since 2019 when the manufacturing of these parts ended.

Q. My system is obsolete. So what brand of controller and or lighting product should I use to convert to?
    A. There are several choices of light switches that are not obsolete. The best choice is a brand that is NON PROPRIETARY which is also known as an OPEN ARCHITECTURE choice. Open Architecture offers several brands all of which are compatible with our choice of products.

Q. Does OPEN ARCHITECTURE lock me into one brand and / or one service company forever?
    A. Absolutely not! There will be no need to always purchase parts from a single manufacturer and there will be no need to always call an "Authorized Dealer" to service my system. The light switches on your walls can remain (if working) or you can replace them with numerous style and color choices available from numerous manufacturers. Better yet…. New open architecture products are introduced to the market often.

Q. Will Open Architecture choices become obsolete one day like my obsolete Smarthouse system has?
    A. No! Our industry has evolved to a much healthier environment. The days of your only choice being another "Proprietary" system is over. Of course that is depending on your choice of how to upgrade your current proprietary system.

       And yes, we will use the same open architecture products sold in "non-smart house" installs to upgrade your obsolete Smarthouse system. Open Architecture is common in the "Connected Home" or IP capable home!

Q. How large is the market for Open Architecture devices?
    A. Countless and growing. A good example is that one of the numerous choices of smartphone apps for these systems has over 8 million users and is growing. This app is known as the Alarm.com app, and there are other apps to choose from.

       The lighting replacements we will use for your upgrade is manufactured by over 10 sources and includes versions for the global markets.

       The optional controller we will use is currently manufactured by over 20 companies each of which have numerous models to choose from.

       The list of open architecture / non proprietary products grows daily.

Q. Do I need to replace my wiring?

    A. No. Our conversion uses the low voltage wiring already inside your walls.

Q. Do I need to replace the wall switches for my lighting?

    A. Some proprietary brands are also obsolete. Replacing them is wise.

Q. Can you adapt to other brands and models of wall switches?

    A. Yes provided that they are open architecture brands and not proprietary.

Q. Once upgraded will I ever need the services of Stewart Electronics again?

    A. No. A prime objective for us is to leave you in charge of your own repairs through any local electrician or technician while using readily available parts. The upgrade process of using your existing wiring is the complexity that requires our services. Once the upgrade is complete we are no longer needed and you can use local talent and contractors.

Q. Will any local Electrician be able to obtain parts and service my home?

    A. Oh yes! There are countless suppliers of the materials. Once converted, the complicated burden has passed. A good example is that a local electrician will replace any faulty light switch using the same techniques they already know. NO SPECIAL DEALER WILL BE REQUIRED!

Q. If I choose to "automate" my upgrade will I need a specially trained technician?

    A. No. Once your home is converted to "Open Architecture" products, thousands of alarm companies, computer technicians will be able to service your system.

Q. Can my upgraded system be connected to "Remotely"?

    A. Oh Yes. You can use an App to interface with your system worldwide. Your choice of service personnel can also be given a password to make changes to your system. Changes like Time and Date lighting schedules can be done by you the user or by your choice of support people. YOU WILL NOT NEED STEWART ELECTRONICS for this but you will need an internet connection and a capable system controller!

Q. Can I count on Stewart Electronics for future support?

    A. Yes, our family business began in 1976 and is now in our 3rd generation. We can and will travel upon request but another PRIME OBJECTIVE is to enable local talent to replace the need for ever using us again after your upgrade. We prefer to train and consult with your choice of local licensed contractors. Better yet, after your conversion you can change contractors at any time. No AUTHORIZED dealer will ever be needed again.

Q. Can I do this upgrade myself (DIY)?

A. This has been done. This fact is proof that the upgrade is possible without being a specialist. However each Smarthouse was a custom install and requires a LOT of time to complete. For a smaller install this is possible. For medium to large installs we suggest you use us and your choice of a local contractor. We can train your local contractor and find that a qualified and dependable lighting contractor is often a good choice.
B. Otherwise, plan for a lot of DIY man hours.

We do not support DIY projects without an initial onsite review and consulting visit.

Q. Can I use a smart phone app or a browser to operate my system
A. Our choice of open architecture controls do support remote operation using a smart phone App. The links below are for the Alarm.com App we will use which now has over 8 million subscribers worldwide.

Examples below (Click on the links):

- **ALARM.COM OVERVIEW**
  - This 11 minute video not only shows our choice of lighting, it also shows:
    - Scenes, Alarm System, Wellness, Alexa Voice Control, Wholehouse sound control, Smart Doorbell Camera, Other cameras with Analytics and Notification Alerts, Water Leak Management, Energy Management, Drapery Control and much more. The list is limited by your imagination only
    - Of course you can choose a "Lighting Only" upgrade.
    - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xLnGyRNj1Qg&t=353s
      Our Family team has toured this "Demo Home". After touring we were asked to install the 2nd Alarm.com Demo Home at Furman University! It too is feature rich like the one featured on this video.

    - Note that the demo home includes control of whole house sound systems, wireless drapery control and many other subsystems (and the list is growing).
    - Any or all of this is possible with your upgrade.

- **TOURING ALARM.COM HEADQUARTERS.**

L-R Melanie Stewart Henson, Anthony Stewart Jr., Tony Stewart

We are standing in front of the display that shows new accounts being activated in real time! 8 Million strong and growing!

Q. Can my install be hacked if I install a controller that has an internet link?
    A. Yes. This is always possible with any home that has a link to the internet.

    But... this is not likely or easy with the Alarm.com system. In 2019 we toured the Headquarters of Alarm.com. Below is a picture of their wall of diplomas and patents, all of which are from their Anti Hacking Security Experts. VERY IMPRESSIVE!

IMPORTANT NOTE: Try getting a look at the wall of fame from other competitors.

Q. After adding a controller, can I automate the following subsystems
  A. MY BURGLAR SYSTEM - Yes, your existing wired sensors can be used and or wireless sensors can be added.

  MY EXISTING CAMERAS - Yes, but we suggest adding cameras from the "Connected Home" platform. For example Alarm.com (and other brands) of cameras offer "Analytics" that will email you a video of anyone walking onto your property. Analytics can tell the difference in a car, human or animal.
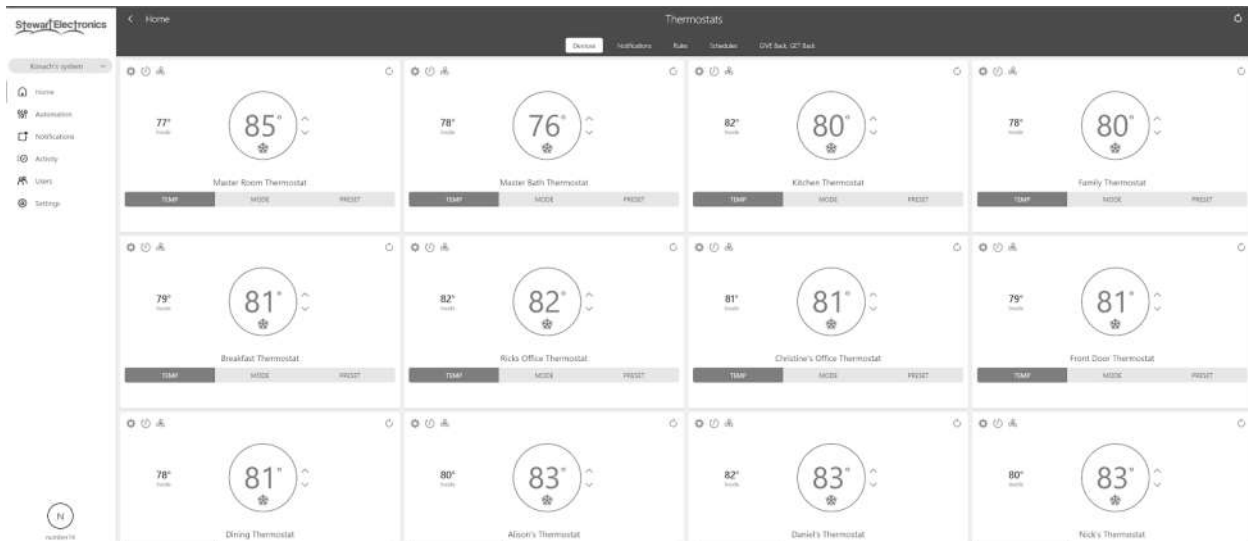
  See the Alarm.com example below for 3 Analytics cameras that alert (send texts) when unauthorized humans enter the areas.

DOORBELL CAMERAS - Yes. Also includes analytics.

THERMOSTATS - Yes. Choose from numerous manufacturers of wireless thermostats.
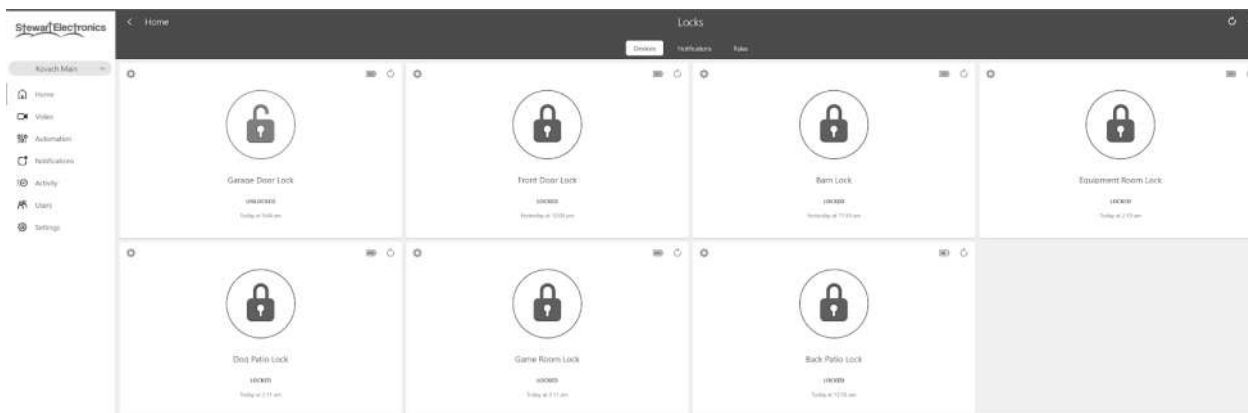No new wires are required!

WHOLE HOUSE SOUND SYSTEMS - Yes. Control all rooms from the Alarm.com app from voice control.
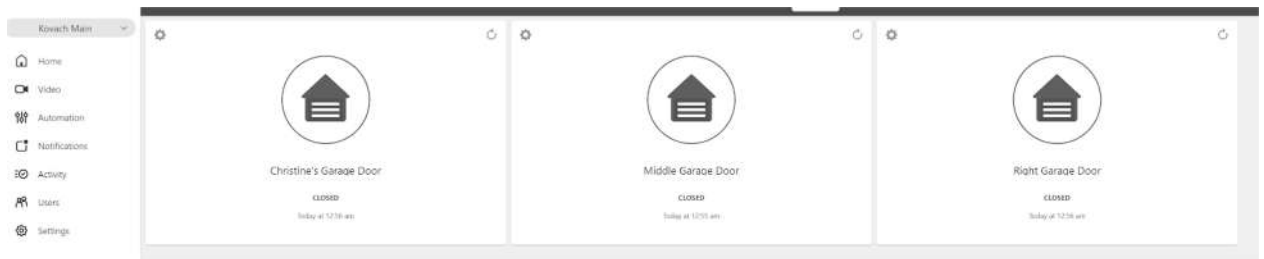https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UQFnp3GuM30

DRAPERY CONTROL - Yes. Wireless or wired control is available and can be scheduled on the Alarm.com app.

WATER LEAK MANAGEMENT - Yes, add wireless sensor under sinks and other sources of leak and add water shut off valve. A leak shuts off the water and emails you the alert notification.
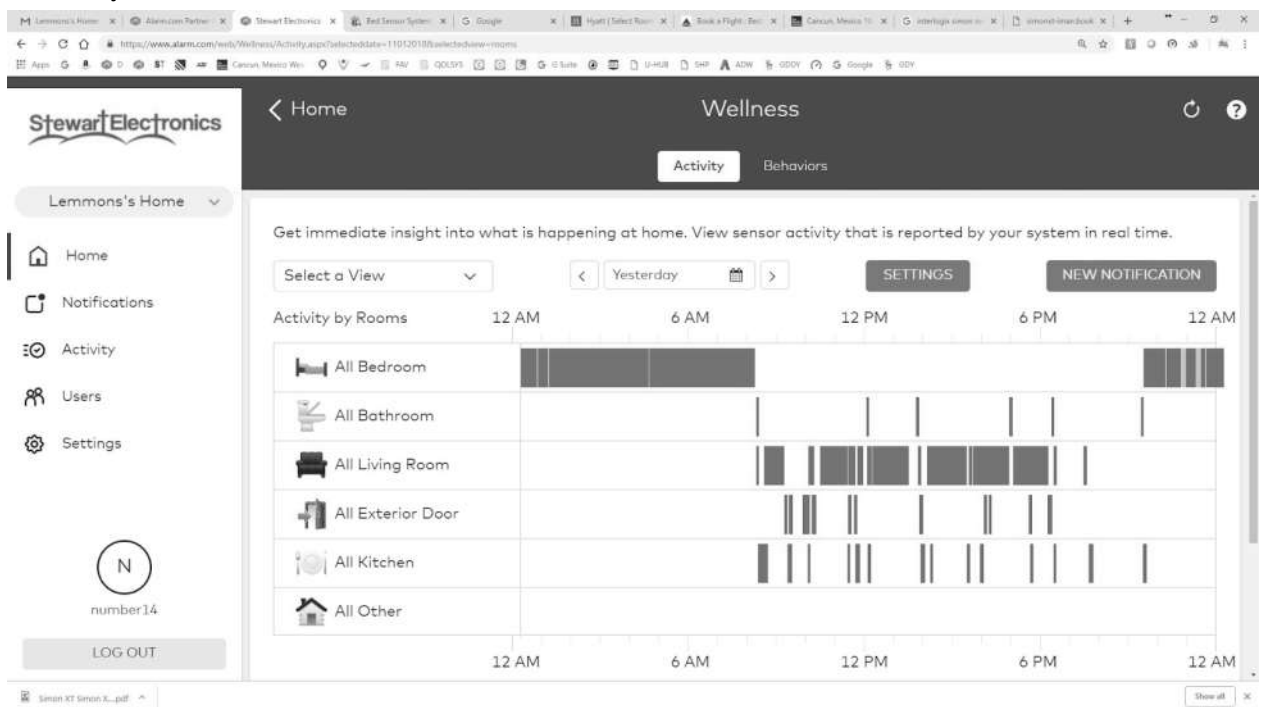
DOOR LOCKS: Yes. Add wireless door locks available from many manufacturers.

GARAGE DOOR CONTROL. Yes. Add wireless garage door controls that are available from several manufacturers.

WELLNESS - Yes. Add wireless sensors under the mattress and in the chair of loved ones with health issues. Also add sensors on refrigerators and medicine cabinets.
If mom does not sleep, take her medication or eat you will get a text notifying you. And… you will get notifications of changes in her movement throughout the home.See one of the many wellness screens below.

FIREPLACE CONTROL, DRIVEWAY SENSORS, SUMP PUMP INTERFACES, SPRINKLER CONTROLS. Yes, yes and yes. And I have left out many more subsystems!

Q. If I choose a competitive system to upgrade my home will the wall switches in each room require a controller to be installed.
   A. Yes. This is a vital point that you should fully understand. With Proprietary systems your wall switches will be replaced with ones that require programming.

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Q. If I choose a competitive brand that uses their proprietary switches in each room, will my lights and scenes work if the controller they install goes down or fails?

    A. No! These types of wall switches require programming to be installed in the controller. Should the controller fail, lights and scenes will not work! STICK WITH ALARM.COM & OPEN ARCHECTURE!

Q. What if I install a controller that goes obsolete in the future?

    A. Excellent question and the answer is vital when making a decision of how to upgrade your obsolete system.

      We use a couple of brands and models of controllers but there are currently a dozen or more different manufacturers of controllers that are compatible with the upgrades we promote. Each manufacturer has numerous models that are designed for small, medium and large installs.

      Our choice to promote "Open Architecture" choices allows you to choose from many different controls (and light switches) from many different manufacturers. You might one day upgrade your controller, but unlike today that does not require you to upgrade your lighting too. Each subsystem in the non proprietary "Connected Home" can stand alone.

Q. Is it possible to use wall mounted tablets to operate my entire system?

    A. Oh Yes, with our choice of fully automated upgrade, our clients often use Ipads or Galaxy tablets to operate their house. With this optional choice voice commands are also possible as well as viewing any cameras from each tablet. If we can route an ethernet cable to a location a tablet can be used.

Q. I currently have things that are not lights that are controlled by my current controller. How does your upgrade handle this?

    A. Very good question and the answer illustrates a major reason NOT to choose Proprietary brands.

      There are some well known brands of proprietary lighting systems. As a lighting system for new construction they have a good reputation. They also offer some wireless products for existing homes. However...

      An area where they often come up short is in the automation or scheduling of non-lighting devices. If you will ever want to automate or schedule your alarm systems, fireplaces, garage doors, sprinklers, water leak management, smart thermostats, cameras and many other subsystems, then be very careful with your proprietary lighting choices. They simply are not the best choice for these purposes.

Q. How will you automate my non-lighting subsystems?

A. Our choice of Alarm.com controls are designed to interface with any device. Better yet, the open architecture market is constantly adding new products. Staying up to date on technology is a prime reason to use our choice of products.

Q. How many Similar Conversions have you done?
   A. Since 1993 we have worked on or upgraded almost 200 systems of various sizes. Below are a few of the challenges we met and conquered. We can also share phone numbers for you to verify our experience.

Shenandoah Valley: One lady had lived in a 11,000 Square foot home for 7 years with no working lights or outlets in any of her bedrooms. She had to run drop cords into each room to get lights and power.

- This home was a perfect example of what happens when you choose a proprietary product line and use local talent.

In the Midwest: This home did not have a single wall switch working in any of the 34 rooms working. It had been that way for 17 years because the Smarthouse installation stopped when the Molex Contractor abandoned the project. This customer had to walk to closets where the Smarthouse lighting blocks were located to turn on/off any lights.

- This home was upgraded to a "lighting only" system

In Houston: This home was wired with a proprietary system that used scene switches throughout the house (like many Smarthouses). It was NOT a smarthouse. Instead it was a an install from a large nationally known nationally known brand (you have heard of this brand). When this system failed the homeowner had lights that would not work until we upgrade his system.

Utah: This home was wired with the same system as mentioned in Houston. This house was on the market for sale (at a greatly reduced price) for several years. After our visit, the home quickly sold at full price.

In Honolulu: A very upscale four story home that was used as a rental for tourists had few remaining light switches that would work.

- This home was upgraded to a "lighting only" system

A Desert Home in Arizona: A Large home had repairs attempted by a local contractor who could not finish and left the homeowner with a large financial loss and a huge mess.

- This home has over 200 lights, 15 thermostats, 7 door locks, many cameras, water leak detection and a very large security system. All of this is on the Alarm.com app and uses "Open Architecture" products.

Q. I want to sell my house. Can I leave the obsolete system in place?
  A. Absolutely not! Sadly, leaving an obsolete system installed then selling your house, reduces the selling price or forces it to stay on the market so long that you drop the price substantially. Installing another proprietary system will also limit the number of potential buyers.

Q. If I sell my house with the Obsolete system installed, will a signed waiver from the buyer resolve me from any future involvement?
  A. Not really. Too many times the courts have ruled that a signed waiver is only valid if it is easy to understand the risk. An obsolete smart house is not considered easy to understand. The end result is that the seller is forced to pay for a full upgrade. We have first hand experience in these sad cases.

Q. Can I do a conversion myself?
  A. Maybe if you have the extra time. A homeowner can often do this kind of work themselves.

Q. Can I do a conversion a little at a time?
  A. Yes. You as a DIY'er or a Licensed Electrician can do a partial conversion. As your Consultant we recommend a visit where we teach the technique by beginning the upgrade. Then You can schedule the remainder of your upgrade at any future time without us.

Q. How do I find an Electrician?
  A. Select a local firm in your area that has been in business for a while with a good reputation. Once they learn the techniques required, finishing a project after our consulting visit normally ends with them or you never needing our advice again.
  B. Yes, we will consult with the electricians at any future time as needed (after our initial visit).

Q. What is the cost of a conversion?
  A. To provide that answer we will need you to email or text us some pictures. Then we will ask some questions and send you an estimate afterwards.

Q. How do I get started with a conversion?
  A. We ask for a 50% or more deposit of all quoted costs to give you a date. Then we share multiple dates for you to choose from.

Q. Are there any other costs?
  A. For upgrades on smaller systems outside of the cost for the Electrician, you will need some electrical parts that average $100 to $200 dollars. If we ship any parts, tools or test equipment to your home you will pay shipping costs.

B. We ask that you pick up lunch for us and the contractor while present to save time.
C.   We may ask for you to ship back to us some of the obsolete parts we remove. However much of the obsolete parts will be discarded by you.
D. For some upgrades we charge a design fee and or a documentation fee.
E. For some installs we charge for "setting up our controller" before we ship it. This often reduces our time onsite and that of your contractor.
F. Lodging, Rental Cars and Travel costs.
G. Our time onsite is for Consulting and Training Only.
H. With fully automated upgrades we can plan to link in remotely after the upgrade as requested.
I.   For larger installs we offer an optional Preventive Maintenance program where we consult with your local contractor.

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