

Helene Project – Detailed view

By Bill Weis

Helene – ALS

Requirements:

1. Be able to voice control a bed
2. Be able to control a TV using voice commands

Solution – High Level:

1. Since Helene did not yet own an adjustable bed, we helped point out some beds that now have commercially available voice options.
2. Helene can now control her TV using voice commands with her new Amazon Fire TV cube.

Details of the Solution

1 – Voice Controlled bed – Diseases like ALS impact one's ability to control a hand remote for adjustable beds and TVs. Helene did not have an adjustable bed, so in her case the logical approach was to help her and her husband find a commercially available solution. In the past few years, voice-controlled beds have become a reality which is not a widely known fact. Customatic was one of the first manufactures to provide a voice solution and their beds are sold via Bob's Discount Furniture. Their solution does not require wifi as the voice commands are processed locally. Reverie also has a voice option for their beds and it is called Reverie Connect. Their solution requires wifi and works with Amazon Echo and Google mini devices. Ergomotion has recently come out with their second generation of their voice solution. The original voice solution worked with Amazon Alexa and Google Minis and their most recent solution is much like the one from Customatic where wifi is not required. All voice commands are processed local to the bedroom. Ergomotion provides the adjustable base for Sealy, Serta, Tempur Pedic Ergo, and Beautyrest. (There may be a few others). Ergomotion also sells the adjustable base directly where you would then purchase your mattress on your own. Helene and her husband wanted a split king with independent controls. This was achieved by purchasing two twin xl adjustable bases. Helene's bed is an Ergomotion Quest 2.5 which comes with voice control, and her husband's adjustable base is the Ergomotion Quest 2.0 which does not come with a voice solution. (There are additional bed manufactures that also have voice options but these are the ones I am most familiar with).

Her husband purchased a twin xl mattress from a store, and we provided Helene with a Medair Low Air Loss mattress that we had purchased for some voice control research. (We could

successfully transmit IR signals via voice to the control unit of the air mattress, but there are challenges with trying to control that air mattress given it was not designed with voice control in mind. It will automatically set the panel to lock after two minutes of idle time which you have to remember to unlock prior to your intended command, and since the panel hangs on the foot of the bed facing away from the person wishing to use voice commands to control it, it just seemed like the solution we created would frustrate the user. There are also some features on the control panel that they did not expose to IR control).

2 - Voice control her TV - We provided Helene with an Amazon Fire TV Cube so she can issue voice commands that allow her to fully control the TV including the Spectrum cable box as well as streaming content on Netflix and Amazon Prime Video.

Resources

Amazon Fire TV Cube support - 888-280-4331