Google just soft-launched nine cool Home app features

Google has launched a bevy of noteworthy additions to its Home app, most of which are available now in public preview (which you can enroll in here). The biggest news, according to *The Verge*'s smart home expert Jen Tuohy, is that picture-in-picture support has arrived for Nest Cams on whichever Google TV product you might have. This is self-explanatory, but nice to have (even though we're surprised Google didn't launch this sooner). It will let you peer through what your various Nest Cams see, conveniently located on a portion of your TV's screen. This one's limited to a public preview for Google TV.

It wouldn't be a Google announcement in 2025 without AI being part of the conversation. Fittingly, Gemini now has broader smart home controls than before. You can broadcast your voice through connected speakers or search your camera clip history by typing a specific query in the Gemini app. It seems like voice dictation for these requests isn't on the table for now. This builds on Google's work to move more basic smart home tasks that would normally be performed by the Google Assistant, as well as some more involved, AI-powered capabilities, into Gemini.

Next up, for any cameras you may have linked to your Google Home app, you'll be able to jump forward and backward within recorded footage in to second intervals by double-tapping on the left or right side of your device's screen (a la fast-forwarding in YouTube on mobile), which should hopefully make it easier to find the moments you're looking for.

Some of the new changes are focused on customization of the Home app, including improvements to automations. Google says

automations can be made with fewer steps directly in the app, with new ways to get more specific about the automatic. Automations can now be made based on presence sensing in the app, which uses phone location, as well as the Soli sensors in some Google Nest products (the Nest Learning Thermostat 4th gen, the Nest Thermostat, and the second-gen Nest Hub), to determine if anyone is home.

Nest Protect smoke and carbon monoxide status is now accessible within the Home app, and no longer requires using the standalone Nest app to monitor. Google notes that you'll "be able to receive critical safety alerts and heads-up notifications, run essential safety check-ups, and hush alarms" from within Home.

The Home app has expanded support for third-party Matter-enabled smart locks, with numerous configurable settings, from managing guests, editing passcodes, receiving lock notifications, and more.

Favorites are getting expanded. Google has added more kinds of tiles that can be pinned, like an indoor temperature dashboard, Wi-Fi actions, and a master light switch to turn all lights in your home on or off. Additionally, the Home app lets you set different Favorites for additional devices you may use other than a phone, like a smart watch or a tablet.

Even if you're away from your phone, there are added controls to Google Home for web that let you make modifications on a browser. Google only mentions the ability to adjust lights, set a temperature, and unlock a door in the press release, but says that more options are available in public preview now.

Lastly, the Home Summary widget that was revealed at I/O 2025 for Pixel phones is available to test on an invite-only basis.

https://www.theverge.com/news/684774/google-home-app-pip-nest-protect-automations-favorites