

The benefits offered by the xComfort devices from Eaton have enabled us to create user-friendly building automation

Thomas Rosner,  
Managing Director, HomeBrace

## Fully under control

### Location:

Urbach, German

### Segment:

Building automation

### Task:

To develop a building control application that gives the user feedback about the status of his various devices

### Solution:

Eaton xComfort offers sensors and actuators for building control

### Results:

User-friendly and comfortable building control via an app which is also easy for older and disabled users to operate

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### Background

Opening the shutter blinds and switching on the radio and coffee machine with a simple click; this vision is now a reality. The company HomeBrace from Urbach is offering its customers individual solutions for controlling various devices in a building. Whether lighting, heating or multi-media: HomeBrace has a suitable solution for both private users and companies. Existing KNX bus systems can also be easily retrofitted with the MyKNX. By connecting to the MyBrace-Controller from HomeBrace, the KNX-Bus can control the full range of home electronics, thereby providing the user with enormous flexibility. An entire home cinema can be operated at the touch of a button, for example. The company also depends on the reliable xComfort range from Eaton in its innovative building automation systems. Ease of use and a high level of flexibility are particularly important to HomeBrace in its systems.

### Challenges

HomeBrace offers its customers an app which can be used to control devices in the home in comfort. After installing the required sensors and actuators at the customer's home, the devices are parameterised by HomeBrace and then the customer can change the settings as required with the aid of the app. The lighting can be dimmed to the required level using a slide control in the app, for example. The same also applies to the volume of a music system or shutting of blinds. The app connects with the MyBrace-Controller, developed by HomeBrace, which communicates with the actuators and undertakes the required adjustments.

HomeBrace also wanted to introduce a feedback feature in the devices to provide information about their status. The app should show whether a light is on or whether the cooker has been switched off. To achieve this, the MyBrace-Controller needed access to all of the build-

ing automation functions within the automated home to provide feedback about the status of the individual devices. HomeBrace was looking for actuators and sensors which could report their status back to the Controller. A suitable range of devices was identified in the form of the xComfort products from Eaton.

### Solution

HomeBrace uses the xComfort product range from Eaton for the automated control of its devices. Unlike other products on the market, xComfort offers significant benefits and progress, according to Thomas Rosner, the Managing Director at HomeBrace. "We were impressed with 3 points about the xComfort range in particular: the routing, the password protection and the status reports via the actuator." HomeBrace was unable to find any other product on the market which would enable the actuator to be read. The actuator provides feedback to the Controller on its sta-



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tus and informs of whether blinds are open or a light has been switched on, for example. Using this information, the Controller can then provide feedback to the control app developed by HomeBrace. This will inform the user whether a lamp in the living room has been turned on, for example.

The sensors and actuators are linked by HomeBrace with the MyBrace-Controller which then controls the individual components. The Controller links the xComfort devices in the home with the local computer network and the internet via the internet standard TCP/IP so that the user can access his/her 'Smart Home' from anywhere.

The xComfort range also offers HomeBrace some additional benefits: the simple assembly and hassle-free interaction between devices enables a flexible and individual installation adapted to the customer. "We found the flexibility of the xComfort series from Eaton to be particularly flexible and subsequent adaptations such as the relocation of sensors are no problem," says Rosner.

The RF switches from Eaton's xComfort range are installed either using screws or adhesive tape, so the switches can be applied at any relevant point. The switches do not need to be wired with the actuators or the Controller because the system operates wirelessly. This avoids the need for complex wiring and enables an easy installation process. Additional sensors, actuators and wireless push-buttons can be integrated into the sys-

tem at any time and only need to be parameterised by an electrician.

Activation of a wireless push-button emits a signal within a tenth of a second and therefore is not in any way a strain on the user. The transmission does not cause any interferences and is emitted in the 868 MHz range. Subsequent conversion is also possible thanks to the wireless technology. The switches do not need a flush-mounted box and thanks to the short circuits and load-free switching are so flat that they can easily be adapted to any style of interior furnishing. There are individual switch designs and colours for each user: subtle white, elegant anthracite or the latest trendy colours – the Eaton xComfort range offers a wide selection of possibilities.

### Results

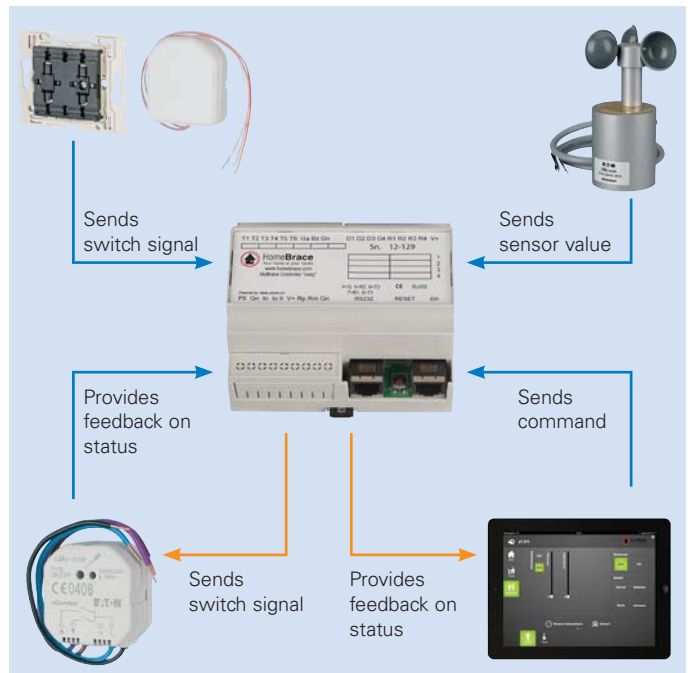
"The benefits offered by the xComfort devices from Eaton mean that we can create user-friendly building automation. xComfort offers complete flexibility during installation and enables comprehensive communication between the devices and the MyBrace-Controller which serves as a basis for the control," says Managing Director Thomas Rosner from HomeBrace. Using the xComfort range, HomeBrace has been able to devise building automation which leaves no wish unfulfilled in terms of flexibility and comfort. Older and disabled people can also use the system to facilitate their everyday lives.



The individual devices are operated via switches and controllers on the wall.



Users can control their homes using the free MyBrace app for iOS or Android from the comfort of their smartphone or tablet.



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