

# Researcher awarded for shaping the 'brain' behind a smart home

**PETALING JAYA:** A Malaysian researcher's work on shaping the "brain" behind a smart home won him the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers' (IEEE) Early Career Award for the year 2014.

Dr Thinagaran Perumal (*pic*), senior lecturer with Universiti Putra Malaysia's Computer Science and Information Technology Faculty, won US\$1,000 (RM3,257) as part of the award, which was won by a Malaysian for the first time.



According to Thinagaran, 34, the award recognises not only academic research, but also gauges other things such as one's breadth of work, leadership and positive impact on the public.

In order to be considered for the award, one has to be a full member of IEEE and the Consumer Electronic Society, as well as having completed a first degree not more than 10 years prior to that.

Thinagaran focused on smart technology and robotics for his PhD

after obtaining a Master's Degree in Intelligent Systems.

"My initial (research) papers were more on inter-operability or how all these gadgets can 'talk' to each other," he said, adding that his research was still ongoing.

"This is preliminary research work that was inherited from my PhD research. I'm very glad to win this award and I feel that this is a stepping stone for me to bring my research to an international arena," said Thinagaran.

A "smart" home is able to anticipate its owner's needs and then

adapt to meet those requirements.

To do that, it would require a home automation system, the brain which integrates electrical appliances in a house so that they could communicate with each other.

"You have many gadgets like your phone, refrigerator, television, washing machine and so on, but how can you get them to run according to your preferences?" asked Thinagaran, who is developing small scale sensors and building applications that would enable all the required communication to take place.