HCA Tech Note 512

Google Assistant

This note is about using with HCA the Google Assistant. It assumes that you are running HCA Plus in client-server mode and have established a HCA Cloud account. It also is assumed that you have selected those devices, programs, and groups that you want to control by voice and given them the names you want to use.

More information about these topics can be found in the Getting Started Guides on the support web site.

The pictures and directions here are from the Google Home app running on a tablet. From a phone, the concepts are the same but what you see, and the actions taken may be somewhat different. And since the Google App seems to change on a week-to-week basis, what you see may look a bit different.

Adding HCA support in the Google Assistant application
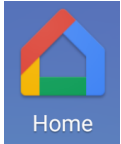
The pictures and directions here are from the Google Home app running on a tablet. From a phone, the concepts are the same but what you see, and the actions taken, may be somewhat different.

NOTE: The choice that you make to add support may seem odd, but in the instructions below you will be choosing a product called "Voice UPB Bridge". It works with HCA and can control all devices types, groups, and programs. It's just the name that was chosen and got stuck at that.
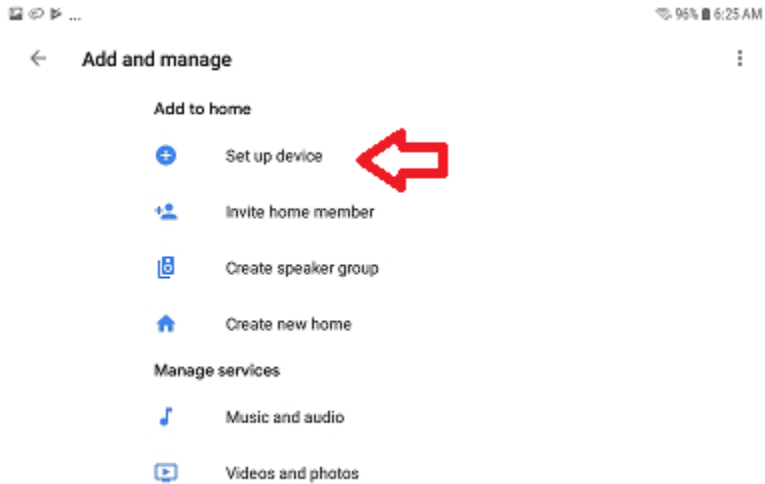
To begin, start the Google Home application on your mobile device and tap the account icon at the bottom right to open the *Account* page.
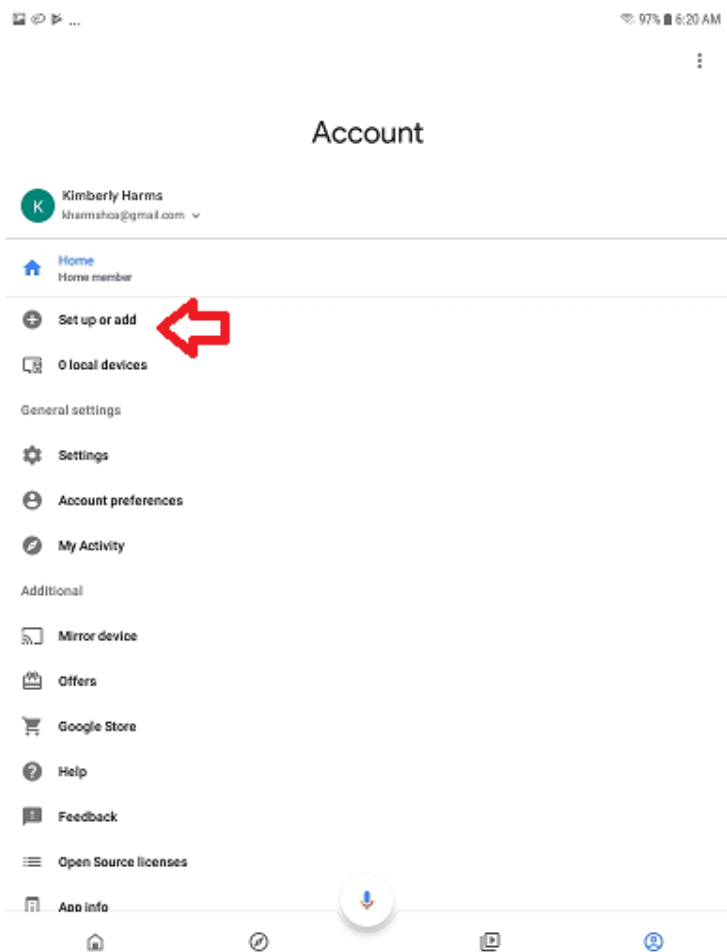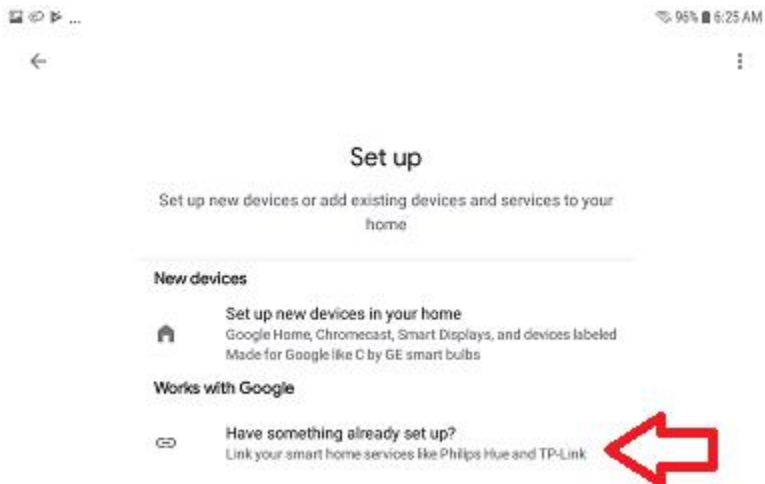
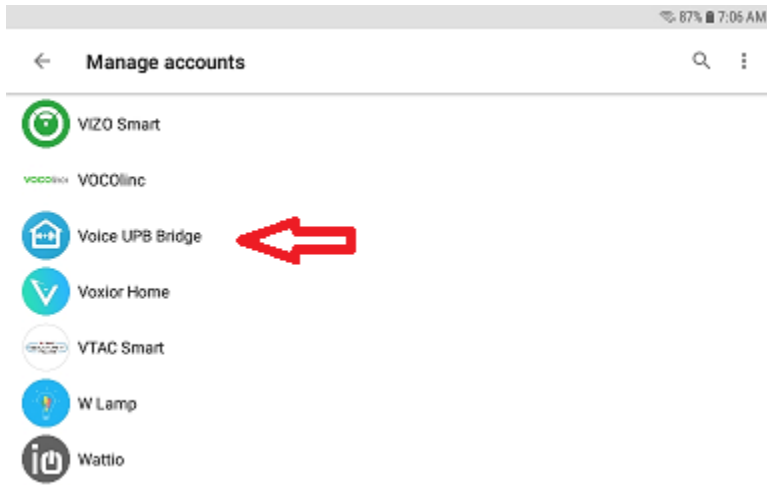Tap on "Set up or Add" to open the *Add and Manage* page.


Tap on "Set up device" to open the *Set up* page.

Tap on "Works with Google" to open the list of available products. Scroll down until you find "Voice UPB Bridge" and tap on that to start the linking process.

The linking process uses your HCA Cloud account user name and password so have those ready. Enter your cloud account user name as the "Bridge Name" and the cloud account password as the "Remote Code". Then tap "Sign in".
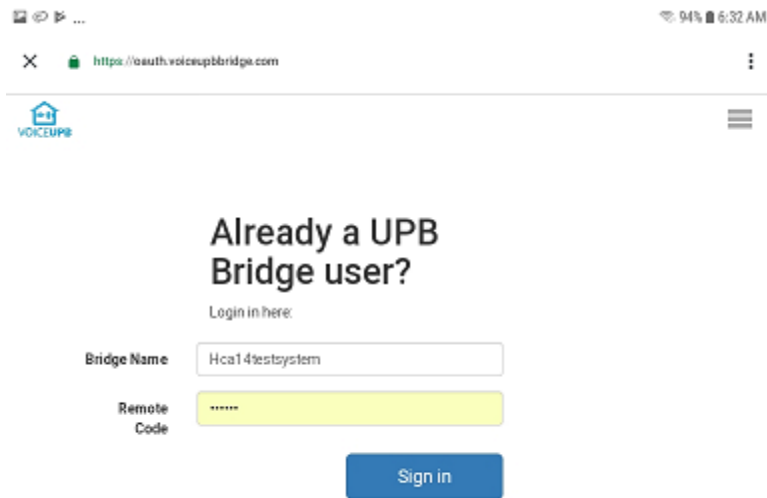
Then approval page appears:
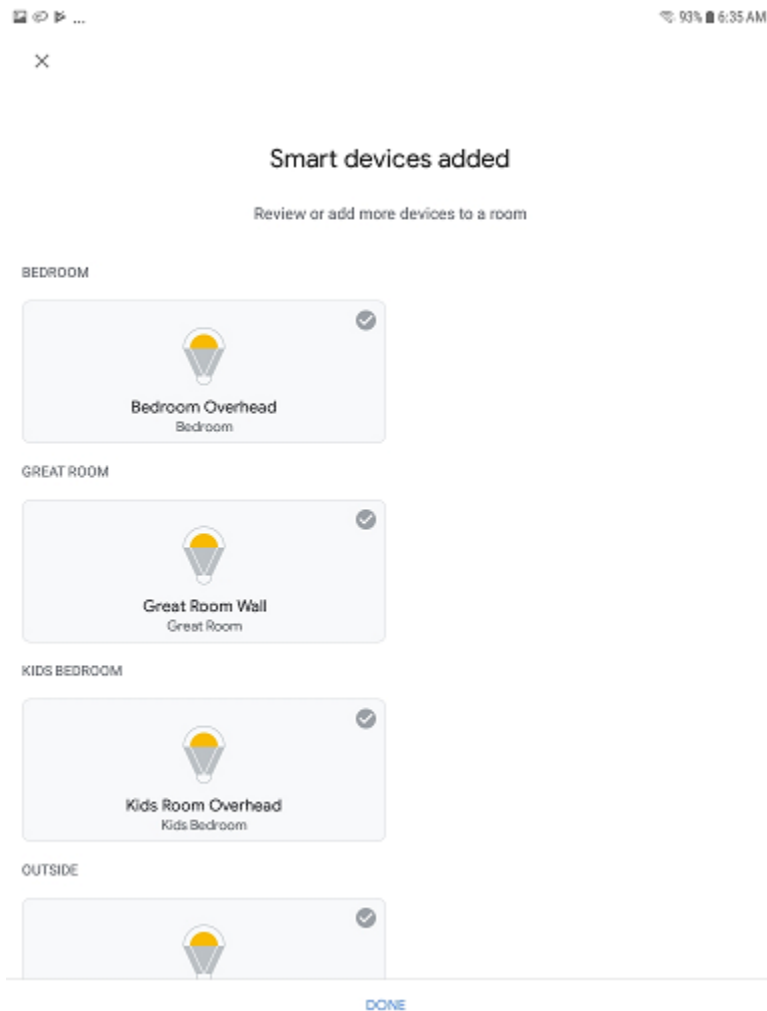

Tap the "Allow" button. A popup appears that says "Linking your Voice UPB Bridge account"

A few other popups may appear and then the "Smart devices added" page appears.

Tap on "Done" and the process is complete.

When you return to the Assistant home page, your devices are listed, and you can control them from there or using voice with the Assistant.
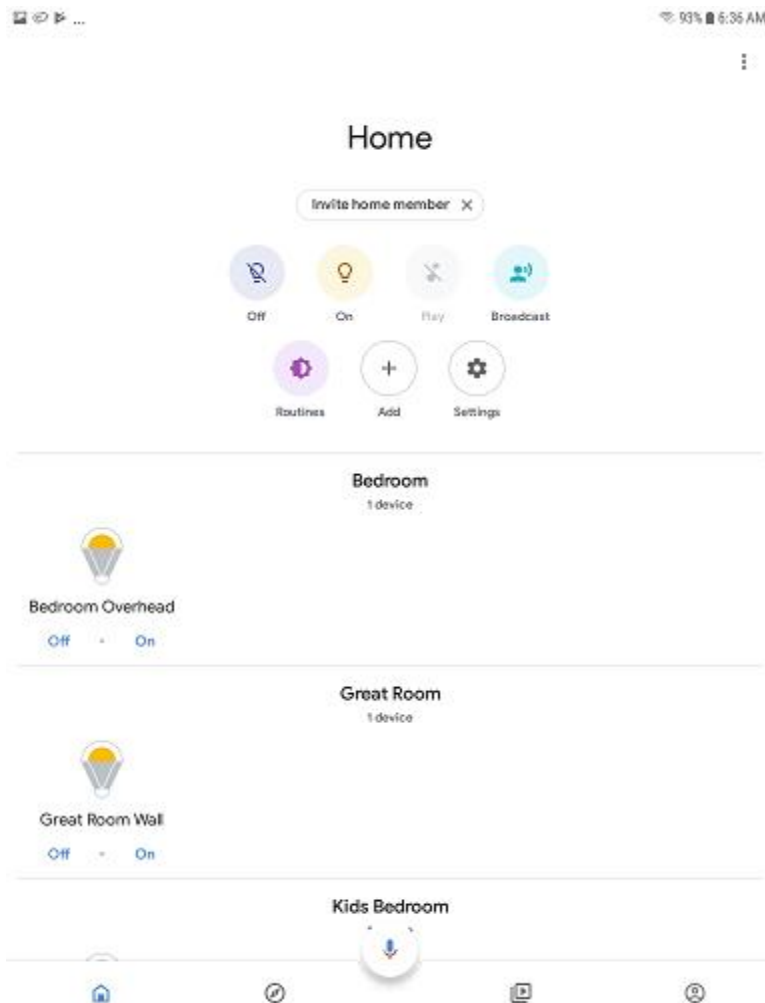
Starting Over

If you want to start over, you can unlink the Voice UPB Bridge and that removes the devices. Then you can begin the add process again. The steps are very similar to those given above:

1. Start the Assistant app

2. Tap on the Account icon at the bottom of the home page

3. Tap on "Set up or add"

4. Tap on "Set up device"

5. Tap on "Works with Google"

The Voice UPB Bridge will now appear at the start of the list as a "linked service". Tap on it to start the unlinking process.
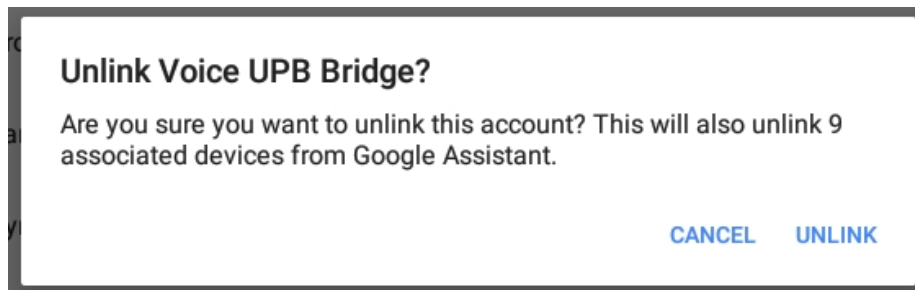

Click on "Unlink" and all the Smart Device are removed. You can then red add and devices will be rediscovered.

Getting it to work: Resolving control problems

Unfortunately, many times the "error reports" Google says really don't help much. Many times, it says "I don't know how to help with that" or something similar regardless of what error HCA returns to Google.

Possible problems are:

1. Google can't connect to the server

2. When Google asks to control a device, the server reports a security problem

3. When Google asks to control a device, the server reports that there is no such device

4. When Google asks to control a device, the server reports it can't carry out the operation

Again, these errors may result in Google saying the same thing. So here is some help in figuring out what went wrong.

a) Make sure you are running the HCA Server and you opened your design file. Even we sometimes forget to open the HCA file in the server.

b) Make sure that you have configured and tested the cloud connection. In the HCA Server application menu in the Tools menu there is a "HCA Cloud Update" and a "HCA Cloud Access Test" menu choice. Use the "Update" menu choice to make sure that the HCA Cloud has your correct IP address and remote access password. Until the

"Test" operation shows success, Google will not be able to access your server. You may have port forwarding incorrectly configured in your router and/or your firewall settings are wrong.

Once you have done these two things that should eliminate problem # 1 above. After this, then you must dig a bit more for more resolutions.

Next, make sure that you have all your interfaces connected and working. You can see this by opening "HCA Options" from the Server application window "Tools" menu and looking on the "Hardware" tab. Also try and control the device from a client (Windows, Android, iOS) and see if that works.

And perhaps the Google error is correct – for example trying to dim a non-dimmable device. It is unfortunate that many times Google gives only the one error statement rather than different replies to help show what the problem is.

One nice feature of the Google Assistant when working with HCA is that any time you make a change to a friendly name – modify it, give a device a friendly name that didn't have one before, or remove the friendly name from a device – Google automatically picks up that change.

##end##