



HCA Tech Note 708

Using Hubitat and HCA Logs to track down problems with voice control

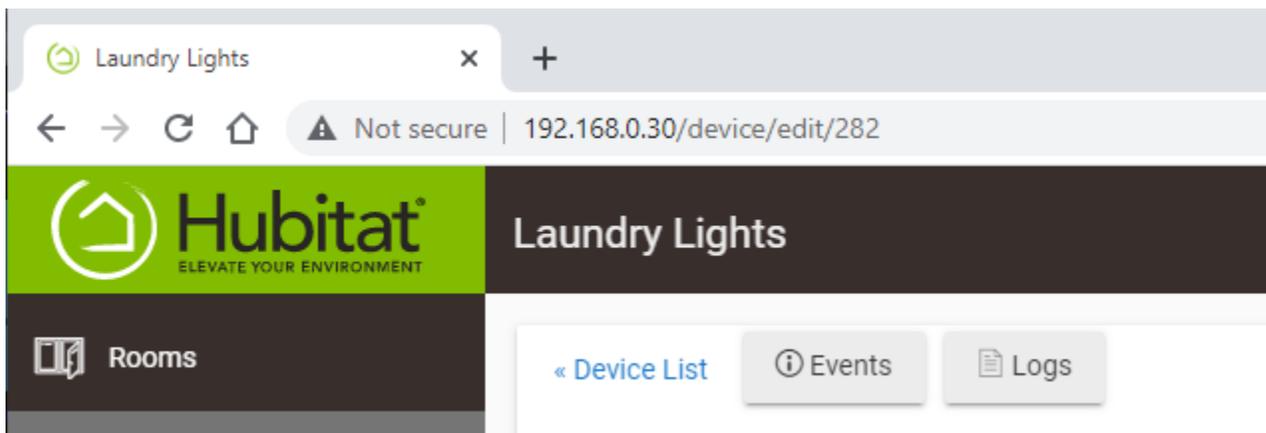
Sometimes you say to Alexa (or Google Assistant) something like “Alexa, Turn on Laundry Lights” and Alexa says “ok” (or makes the “bing” sound) but the light doesn’t come on. What failed? Here is a procedure to identify where the fault lies.

Immediately stop what you are doing and put on your detective hat and start the investigation. Later it will be too late as clues will be much harder to find. Stop asking Alexa to do stuff and stop flipping switches on and off. You want to have the “cleanest” data as possible so you can more easily see the problem.

Connect to Hubitat from a browser. Locate the device you tried to control in the “Devices” section and click on its name to open its info. In the example I’m using “Laundry Lights”.

Laundry Lights (Laundry - Lights)		HCA Dim Object	User	12-28 9:11am
--------------------------------------	--	----------------	------	--------------

I click on the name and see a page with this at the top:



Click on “Events” button to see what Hubitat has done with the device recently.



HCA Tech Note 708

Laundry Lights Events

Country Home

[« Edit Device](#)



Name	Value	Unit	Description	Source	Type	Produced by	Triggered apps	Date
command-on			Command called: on	DEVICE	command	Amazon Echo Skill		2022-12-28 09:11:17.193 AM PST
switch	on			DEVICE		Amazon Echo Skill	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Amazon Echo Skill (deviceHandler) 	2022-12-28 09:11:17.189 AM PST
level	100			DEVICE		Amazon Echo Skill	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Amazon Echo Skill (deviceHandler) 	2022-12-28 09:11:17.186 AM PST

Right away from this you can see that, in this example, Alexa was able to connect to the Hubitat and initiate a command. If you don't see anything from the voice assistant at approximately the expected time – always check the last column to see if you are working with current data and not some old data – then the problem is in the Alexa to Hubitat connection and HCA isn't involved. Make sure that all the work you did setting up the Alexa Hubitat skill in both the Alexa interface and in your Amazon account is all still correct. That's all the steps in HCA technical note #703.

If you do see Alexa interacting with Hubitat in the events log, then it is off to the HCA side. Start a client to the HCA server and open the log in HCA that you have configured to show device commands for the protocol of the device. In this example it is Log1:

Log 1: No filter (2842 / 2842)

Entry	Date	HW	Cmd	Id	Name
X10	12/28/2022 9:10:56 AM	W800(12)	ON	K4	Motion - Motion Office
X10	12/28/2022 9:10:56 AM	W800(12)	ON	K4	Office - Motion Sensor:1
X10	12/28/2022 9:11:03 AM	W800(12)	ON	K4	Motion - Motion Office
X10	12/28/2022 9:11:03 AM	W800(12)	ON	K4	Office - Motion Sensor:1
UPB	12/28/2022 9:11:13 AM	UPB PIM(13)	ON	013	Laundry - Lights
X10	12/28/2022 9:12:02 AM	W800(12)	OFF	K4	Motion - Motion Office
X10	12/28/2022 9:12:02 AM	W800(12)	OFF	K4	Office - Motion Sensor:1

TechSup@HCATech.com

www.homecontrolassistant.com



HCA Tech Note 708

You are looking for the device that was commanded at approximately the expected time. In this case the Hubitat event log shows 9:11:17 and the HCA log shows 9:11:13. It's not unexpected that the clocks in the two machines – Hubitat and the HCA computer- may be different by a little. But you should find an HCA log entry close enough to show this is the same event.

Because HCA logging is so configurable, if you don't see a log entry make sure you haven't suppressed the logging for the device or you are looking at the wrong log. If you are sure you are in the correct log and if you can't find the expected entry, then the problem is in the communication between the Hubitat and HCA. Make sure all the IP addresses haven't changed and HCA has the current IP address for the Hubitat, and Hubitat has the current IP address for the HCA computer.

The HCA device driver you added to Hubitat uses the two-part name when it sends a message to HCA. Make sure that is correct and you didn't make a name change on the HCA side and not update the Hubitat side. Look at the device properties to see that name. Here is our example device "Laundry lights" in Hubitat:

Preferences

HCA 2-Part name *
Laundry - Lights

When HCA Server connection made
12/27/2022 3:38:48 AM

If you did change the folder/room name or device name in HCA and what Hubitat shows is no longer correct, you should use the HCA App to update Hubitat as explained in the technical note to get them into sync.

If you do see the expected log entry in HCA for the device (now we know that Alexa talked to Hubitat OK, and Hubitat talked to HCA OK) perhaps HCA didn't talk to the device OK. Make sure that the interface for the device is online and working. If it is then it could be the usual issue of HCA sending out a command and the device not getting it due to, well, all the usual reasons – noise, message collision, signal strength, etc.

TechSup@HCATech.com

www.homecontrolassistant.com



HCA Tech Note 708

You have these tools. The debugging procedure isn't hard. Be a detective.

##end##

TechSup@HCATech.com

www.homecontrolassistant.com