

HINTS FOR HOMEOWNERS

New Audio System Strikes The Right Chord

(NAPSA)—A growing number of today's cutting-edge households are discovering a secret to family harmony: multiroom audio.

A multiroom audio system takes the music you desire—from CDs, a hard disk, your MP3 player, FM or satellite radio—and sends it to any room in the house. Multiroom audio systems enable family members to play the music they love when they want to hear it, wherever they are.

The demand for multiroom audio systems has grown over the last few years, with projections for household penetration as high as one quarter of new homes by the later third of this decade. In fact, 65 percent of homebuilders currently offer multi-room audio as a standard or optional feature, according to the Consumer Electronics Association's (CEA) Multi-Room Audio Video Council.

Imagine speakers that disappear into the walls, a tiny wall-mount keypad that scrolls through audio sources and a volume control for each room. An average new home installation of three to five rooms can cost as little as \$1,500, with volume control, speaker selection and surround sound.

Multiroom video is becoming a popular feature, too. It lets you watch cable or satellite TV on any TV in the house or start a DVD in the family room and finish it in the bedroom before going to sleep. Put in a low-cost security camera and it can be wired to play on any TV throughout the house.

Experts say the best time to install a multi-room audio or video system is during new construction when the required video, data and speaker cable can be run more efficiently to each room.



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Installation firms work with builders, architects and electricians to make sure entertainment needs are fulfilled at each stage of the construction process. Wiring for them now helps insure the home's resale value for years to come.

Finding a qualified electronics designer/installer is the first step. CEA's TechHome Web site (www.ce.org/integratorsearch) initiative features an online referral database where consumers can search for quality installers and dealers in their area by company name, state or zip code. Also, ask the installer for references in the area. Talking with other customers will help you ensure the installer delivers what he's promised.

You can also learn valuable insights from other system owners that may help you better understand your own needs and wants, which always pays off when the work is completed. Be sure any firm you go with has a proven record in the business and has the staying power to serve your needs in the future. A little planning can go a long way.