

## Listen To This: Tips On Choosing The Right PC Speakers

(NAPSA)—Today, millions of people are downloading music, watching DVDs, and playing video games on their PC. Many of them are looking to upgrade their PC sound system for a better multimedia experience, knowing that a good set of speakers can transform ordinary digital audio into a prime seat at a concert.

But choosing PC speakers can be confusing. When you walk into your local electronics store, the multimedia speaker area is overflowing with 2.0, 2.1, 5.1 and even 6.1 speaker systems. How do you know what's best for the type of listening you do at your PC?

Here's some help in sorting it all out.

**2.0: Two satellites:** A simple speaker pair is the most basic PC setup. Installation is easy, since this speaker configuration is compatible with standard PC soundcards. The 2.0 is an entry-level system, which works best for people looking for basic PC sounds such as "You've Got Mail" when you log onto e-mail.

**2.1: Two satellites, one subwoofer:** If you're an avid PC music listener, consider a 2.1 system, which includes a subwoofer (note: the .1 means the system includes a subwoofer). A subwoofer is better able to handle the bass frequencies that make for a richer listening experience. Although almost as easy to install as a 2.0 system, the addition of powerful bass dramatically enhances any music.

**5.1: Four satellites, one center speaker, one subwoofer:** This configuration takes a 2.1 model and adds two rear satellite speakers plus a front, center speaker—giving you true surround sound. With a 5.1, you can experience true positional audio, meaning you can hear sound from all directions while playing games or watching videos. So you'll actually know when the enemy is sneaking



**SOUND IDEA: Success is finding a speaker system that brings your multimedia PC experiences to life.**

up from behind! To take full advantage of a 5.1 system, you'll need a 6-channel PC soundcard (check your soundcard manual to determine compatibility, or consult your local electronics store for assistance).

**6.1: Four satellites, one front center speaker, one rear center speaker, one subwoofer:** A 6.1 speaker system is similar to a 5.1 speaker system, with the addition of a dedicated rear center channel, for better positioning of rear sound effects. This system is most appropriate for PC gaming, as there are now some games on the market that are encoded to produce true 6.1 surround sound. This is not an extremely popular configuration, however, since there are a limited number of true 6.1 sound sources. With a 6.1 configuration, a 7-channel PC soundcard is necessary for true 6.1 surround sound.

Some people think the price of speakers is based solely on the number of pieces—but in reality, many 2.1 speakers cost more than 5.1 or even 6.1 systems. System prices are based on both the number of pieces and the power output. First, identify what configuration you want; then determine how much power—expressed in

wattage—is needed. The higher the wattage, the higher the price. Wattage indicates how much power a speaker system can deliver. It's important to note the RMS wattage on each system. Since the FCC sets standards for RMS power measurements, this specification can be used to compare similarly featured systems. Depending on your sound needs, you might find systems with 40 watts adequate, while others want the earth-shaking power of a 400-watt system. Many times, power needs can be determined by the size of the room you're hoping to fill (40-70 watts is perfect around the PC, while 400-500 watts is needed to fill a large family room).

Besides deciding on power, check to see if the speakers offer any third party technologies or certifications, such as THX. THX certification ensures that the product has been tested and approved by an independent audio authority and meets certain power and clarity measures—premium high-end products will carry the THX seal of approval.

If you choose carefully, you needn't break the bank. For example, Logitech, one of today's leading companies in PC audio, offers two lines of speakers, the premium Z-Series and the budget-conscious X-Series, each providing a number of configurations at various price points. For example, for just under \$100 you can purchase the Logitech Z-3 speakers, a nicely designed, high quality 40-watt 2.1 system. For booming 5.1-surround sound, the THX-certified Logitech Z-5300 packs a powerful punch, offering 280 watts, for less than \$200. And, if 6.1 sound is what you need to make your games come alive, the Logitech X-620 (70 watts) speaker system for \$99 has received high praise.

For more information, visit [www.logitech.com](http://www.logitech.com).