

Home Electronics: A Collaborative Effort

Contributed by the AIA Knowledge Resources Staff

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SUMMARY

The home electronics industry has advanced substantially over the past 20 years with the addition of digital television and wireless networks. With contemporary lifestyle changes, homeowners now expect everything when they want it, where they want it, and how they want it. Peter Cook, one of five presenters at the 2007 “Full Spectrum Practice” symposium sponsored by the AIA Custom Residential Architects Network, discussed the current trends in home electronics and how electronics professionals can provide essential consulting services to design professionals.

CEDIA PROFESSIONALIZES THE ELECTRONIC DESIGN FIELD

The 1989 formation of the Custom Electronic Design and Installation Association (CEDIA) set a standard for the industry. CEDIA offers a level of credibility to its member businesses known as Electronics Systems Contractor (ESC) or Residential Electronics Systems Contractor (RESC) to distinguish a company that specializes in custom home electronics. CEDIA has developed a certification process for individuals, known as CEDIA Certified Designer (CCD) and CEDIA Certified Installer (CCI) to recognize professionals who know current trends, technologies, and homeowner concerns and can serve as valuable design team consultants.

For residential architects, each project requires different levels of expertise. Families have different lifestyles that require distinct knowledge sets. Kitchens, outdoor living areas, and home electronics are in demand in the custom residential market. Sometimes architects look to outside consultants—for example, kitchen consultants, landscape architects, and many others. Now they can also look to CEDIA-licensed businesses and ESC professionals for the extra skills required for home electronic systems.

TERMINOLOGY

Discussions about home electronics can be confusing because of jargon and ever-changing

technology. Homeowners and architects should ask questions and make sure they understand the terminology. For example, these two terms are commonly misapplied or misunderstood:

- **Media room.** A multifunctional room, often seen as a “great room” or family room, that typically contains electronics, e.g., a television or stereo
- **Home theater.** A use-specific room, focused on excellent video and audio experiences, either for viewing, listening, or gaming and requiring extensive use of electronics

TIPS FOR HOME ELECTRONIC DESIGN

Here are some of the tips from the CEDIA Web site for homeowners and design and construction professionals.

Wire for everything now. Wire for future potential needs during renovation or construction. Adapt for upcoming technologies and make future changes easier.

Plan for HDTV. High-definition, with its enhanced picture quality, is the standard for digital television.

Insist on an integrated system. As you buy new electronic components, make sure everything is compatible and accessible.

Integrate lighting control with home electronics system. Make life easier with remote controls to change the mood and lighting in your home. With a touch of a button, you can lower the lights and reduce energy use.

Buy the most current products. Big electronics stores typically buy in large batches and lure prospective buyers with discounts when the product’s technology is outdated or something new is on the horizon.

About the Presenter

Peter Cook is a CEDIA-certified designer and Level I installer. He has over 15 years of experience in the sales, design, project management, and installation of custom electronics. Cook’s projects have been

featured in numerous periodicals and trade journals including *Electronic House*, *Residential Systems*, *Home Systems Installer*, the *Wall Street Journal*, and the *New York Times*.

RESOURCES

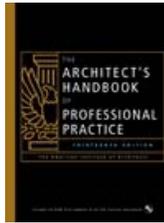
More Best Practices

The following AIA Best Practices provide additional information related to this topic:

- 01.03.01 Pro Bono Services: Improving the Profession
- 12.03.06 Making the Transition from Designer to Design Builder
- 12.03.04 Consideration for Undertaking Residential Design-Build

For More Information on This Topic

See also “Architectural Acoustics” by Christopher Jaffe, PhD, Hon. AIA, and Russell A. Cooper, in *The Architect’s Handbook of Professional Practice*, 13th edition, Chapter 18, page 556.



See also the 14th edition of the *Handbook*, which can be ordered from the AIA Bookstore by calling 800-242-3837 (option 4) or by email at bookstore@aia.org.



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Key Terms

- Leadership
- Associations
- Interdisciplinary associations
- CEDIA
- Residential architecture