

The Blair Custom House Project

In the beginning, whole house surge suppression with a counterpoise foundation was installed, as well as a conductive floor in the control room. For easy remediation, all cables are color-coded (i.e. security runs, component runs, video runs, etc.) with color-matching heat shrink finishes and Velcro strapping, as well as parallel cable combing. Inside the panels the power strips' cords were cut to length so there was no waste of space. The phone and the Ethernet cabling, which is Category 6-ready, can be swapped because of the patch panel installation. The RG-6 coaxial wiring is also in a patch panel configuration, allowing for satellite or cable television interchangeability. The house has three surround-sound systems, all of which can be controlled by hand held touch screens: they are located in the dedicated Theater, in the Great Room, and in the Master suite. (And the hand held screens can go from room to room, interchangeably, using all the same macros to adjust lighting, access cameras, and arm or disarm security!) These sound systems are fed from HD sources in the control room. The Great room has an Élan touch screen, installed into woodwork in a kitchen countertop, which automatically switches to camera view when the driveway sensor or doorbell triggers it. This touch screen, too, can control the sound system, and the main television. The Master suite A/V equipment, with the exception of the plasma TV, is kept in the control room, under the stairs. These, too, are controlled by the whole house portable touch screen (MX3000), in addition to the elegant Art Screen "painting" that disguises the TV, as well as a motorized drapery. The dedicated Theater is custom designed by the client and integrator, and built with customized acoustic panels, powered theater chairs, automated lighting and security, two high definition cable STBs, Windows media center on a custom built PC, a Playstation3 for Blu-ray playback, and a DVD/VCR player. The automation system has many "vocal" functions: *announcing zone violations *announcing specific doors/windows opening or left open *announcing driveway alerts *announcing countdown timers for arming and disarming *announcing warnings of specific refrigerator failure *announcing warnings to intruders outdoors The automation is programmed to: respond to temperature/humidity sensors, and the clients' preferences when controlling thermostats; control hall and stairway lighting when triggered by sensors; and integrate theater lighting, as well as standard scene lighting. Remote access over phone, by Internet, and on the home media center PC via LAN is available.

Describe the specific needs and desires of the customer for the job, including any special requirements that were addressed by your system design and integration.

Family safety, security, and comfort were all taken into consideration when programming the software for the automated security system. Which temperatures, which alerts, which announcements the clients wanted were directly put into the system so their personal needs and wants could be anticipated. Specifically, programming was altered as the clients "lived with it," and made changes in their initial choices. (The integrator came back several times to make amendments in programming.) The Vutec Art Screen was placed above a fireplace in the Master suite with in ceiling surround sound, and a discreetly placed center speaker that's camouflaged into the setting behind greenery. The visual effect is stunning--it looks like a fine painting above the mantle, and nothing else! Not to mention the artistically crafted trim-out in the control room. Even the outer housing of various devices was painted with wall paint to match the rooms, and not leave anything sticking out like a sore thumb.