

The Distributed Audio system

The distributed audio/video system is based on Élan and Key Digital matrix switchers, and hand held touch screens. All audio and video functions are controlled by these interchangeable whole-house touch screens. There are five zones, and thus, five room pages (screens): Dedicated Theater Surround Sound Master suite Surround Sound Kitchen/Great room Surround Sound Office Outdoors Source components are in a rack in the control room, under the stairs. The theater sources are as follows: the PS3 sits between the theater chairs, and is connected by remote input runs at the base of the rear platform; next, two high definition cable boxes, a camera system, and a media center computer are switched from a remote location in the control room. When the driveway or doorbell sensors are triggered, the programmed alert is heard through the rear speakers in the Theater. The playback device automatically pauses so "Camera mode" can be selected on the touch screen to access on-screen viewing of the door or driveway. Changing modes on the touch screen releases "Pause, and the playback resumes. If the movie being viewed is stored in the media center computer, it can be watched in the Great Room, or on Master Suite plasma, controlled by hand held touch screen. 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 touch screen (MX3000), in addition to the elegant Art Screen "painting" that disguises the TV, as well as a motorized drapery. In the Kitchen/Great room areas, as the doorbell or driveway sensors are triggered, the camera views automatically come up on the Élan touch screens, installed into the woodwork of a kitchen countertop, and on the main television screen, if on, as a Picture in Picture (PIP). Audio adjustments can be made on either the in wall or hand held touch screens. Here, the playback equipment is located under the main television in an armoire. When the "Office" is selected on the touch screen, the audio can automatically be heard from the office ceiling speakers, and the video is routed to the TV tuner card on the office computer. This has been programmed in a "macro" on the touch screen. (Each room/screen has such macros: related equipment automatically turns on when the function of the room is selected, i.e. "Watch TV.") All cameras can be viewed in all video locations via computer monitor (including laptops using Wi-Fi), television, Élan in wall touch screens, Theater screen, or over the Internet from a remote location. The outdoor speakers on the back porch above the outdoor kitchen are controlled by the MX3000. Their audio source is also the rack in the control room. After selecting the function, the user can select the rack and have access to any of the source components. The user can also access the different sets of speakers from their room page (screen) or the rack page (screen).

The owners enjoy listening to music all the time, and carry iPods outside the home. So inside they wanted their music to be everywhere they worked and played. With the convenience of the hand held touch screens that operate nearly all their electronics, and the fact that the macros programmed into these touch screens included all necessary functions so they didn't have to fuss with pushing too many buttons, the owners are able to enjoy their entertainment with little thought. Being able to view security cameras in several video venues throughout the house also gave the owners piece of mind. That was something essential to them. The TV and playback viewing are just plain fun. As for the aesthetics: all wiring is in the walls, and infrared controllers relay the commands. The speakers are either in ceiling, or in the case of the stand up theater speakers, behind acoustic paneling blending into the dark walls. There is music and video everywhere, and it's not ostentatious, just pleasant.