



"The Hardware of Life"

Adding the Right Products for your Home

Previously, we discussed the differences of cable types and what to install within your walls. This article will focus on the type of products you can add for each facet of Automation, that will give you the benefit of a Smart Home.

Data Networking -You now have more than one PC or are thinking about purchasing a newer model, to replace the old one. How do we share information between these computers or other devices attached to them? What about using the High-Speed Internet Connection for both PC's. *Do I have to pay for a separate connection fee?*

The simple answer is that you will need to purchase a **Networking Hub, Router or Switch**. What is the difference between these devices?



A **Network Hub** - Is a device that when attached by Data Network Cables (Cat 5 or above) can translate information from different protocols (languages) and send them to the appropriate destination. A Hub can partake in receiving information of Speeds ranging from 10MB per second to 100MB per second. Make sure your PC or Internet device handles the speed necessary for each device and the applications it will be supporting. For Higher Graphical devices a 100MB Hub is recommended, if you are only connecting Internet appliances then a 10MB will suffice.

A **Network Router/Switch** - Is really an intelligent Network Hub that has the additional ability to distribute High-Speed Internet services or IP based protocols to different attached devices while providing additional security and protection from the outside world. These devices can be upgraded via software to stay current with security trends and contain an address translation service for routing data (think of this as a high paid language interpreter operating from a booth).

Remember, that newer Internet Appliance devices will be available and they can include portable *Web Tablets, Picture Frames, Internet Fridges and Microwaves*. Smart Utility devices that can **monitor** your Water, Electrical and Heating and Air Conditioning. These devices will one day be connected to your Network Hub. In addition, wireless networks are making inroads into homes and common areas, more about that next month.

Purchasing a Structured Wiring Solution from a professional can eliminate the need to worry about Network connections and are usually included in a packaged offering. Call a professional today to find out more.



Intercoms - Part of the wiring infrastructure of Intercoms, normally takes into account the type of hardware you are going to install. Which means you better have a good idea about what hardware devices you are installing before your run the wires.

Intercoms can also transfer Video images as well as voice and your decision to install Video devices at entry points or far away areas in the home where Voice communication is next to impossible must be considered in the wiring infrastructure.

Your choice to install intercoms range from communication *from the **inside to someone outside***; from **one internal room to the next**, or from *the **Web to someone externally or internally** within your residence*.

Another consideration is the type of interface you wish to use. Do you require to view individuals from an Intercom Device like the **AIPHONE** (seen here) or do you prefer to view them from a TV or Computer Monitor.

Intercom Hardware is currently evolving into the next Generation of devices, so be sure to ask questions where this technology for these devices is going, to you ensure you have the greatest flexibility possible.

Security - HVAC - Lighting- 3 facets of a required Home Management System. The ability to control these devices independently *or enjoy the benefits of integration of these devices*. The choice is yours. The most integral part of and HMS system is the ability to control devices through one Interface. How will this interface look and what type of other methods can achieve the same results are considerations one must make upon hardware selection. In choosing the right Home Management System Hardware,



requires you to think about the type of *functionality, aesthetics* and *budgetary* guidelines you have set for yourself. From **Wall mounted** security-type keypads to in-wall 8" TFT **touch-screens** or **table-top** 12" display terminals; the choices are ever growing. Other wall aesthetics include your choices of wall switches for **lighting controls**. They can be simple off/on switches to a bank of controls that light up more than one mood. HVAC controls can be tiny sensors that measure air conditions in rooms, to more independently controlled units within a room.



In future articles we will talk about hardware devices for Audio and Video enjoyment in the Family Room or Dedicated Home Theatre.

Remember in selecting the right Automation system, consult with a professional. All Home Automation Hardware Devices are not created equal. Please consult a professional for advice in selecting these components.

Smart Homes, Smart Builders, Smart People

INTERACTIVE INTERIORS

Richard J. Railey is currently the CEO and Founder of Interactive Interiors Inc. A Residential and Commercial Automation Firm that specializes in delivering: Whole Home Automation Design through to Installation Services for MDU/MTU Dwellings, High-End Custom Homes and Tract Home Subdivisions. Currently, Interactive Interiors has a presence in Ontario, Nova Scotia and British Columbia in Canada. They also perform Residential Design Services for the USA and UK market. Mr. Railey has over 12 years of Information Technology Experience working previously for various Hospitality Service Organizations in Directorship, Management, and Conciliatory roles. He formed Interactive Interiors Inc. in 1998 upon the idea that Residential Home Owners would soon want and demand the benefits of the Internet and improved communication within the home when it came to functional appliances and controls. Mr. Railey's commitment to ensuring that simplified lifestyles can be attained by using simple and reliable controls, has positioned the organization to handle accelerated growth that awaits the chasm of the Residential Automation Industry over the next few years.

Mr. Railey can be reached at the Corporate Head Office in Toronto at 418 482 7003 or emailed through Richard@interinter.com .