

Modern Marvel

A Utah family fills their new home with sophisticated technologies—without going broke. *by Lisa Montgomery*
photography by Brian Griffin

A dedicated home theater with all the trimmings can run upwards of \$100,000. For that amount of money, you'll have one fantastic room for settling in and watching big-screen blockbusters. Allocating so much cash for a dedicated cinema might be wise for a family of movie buffs, but for Kelly and Sydney King, putting all their financial eggs into that one high-tech basket would have been downright silly. "We're just not a theater room kind of family," Kelly explains. "We'd rather watch movies in a more casual atmosphere."

Artison speakers ride on the sides of a 52-inch Sony 1080p flat-panel TV, the only evidence of technology in this space. The rest of the gear, including multiple digital video recorders and a 400-disc DVD changer, is located in the basement. A Control4 distribution system sends the entertainment system's video and audio by way of Category 5 Ethernet wiring.





The kitchen features a 15-inch Panasonic LCD TV, SpeakerCraft in-ceiling speakers and a Control4 Mini Touchscreen for summoning a song or TV program to the space.

A Reality Check

Besides, there was so much more the Kings wanted to incorporate into their new 5,000-square-foot home. Having a system that could play music throughout the house was a top priority, as was having a robust security system and a high-speed computer network. A few of those amenities, the Kings discovered, would come standard with their home, thanks to an arrangement between their builder, Grant Luttmmer of Luttmmer Custom Homes of Salt Lake City, UT, and home systems installation firm Safe & Sound Systems of Draper, UT. As part of the builder's technology package, the Kings would receive from Safe & Sound Systems a central vacuum system, a high-end structured wiring system, and a GE security system with integrated fire and carbon monoxide protection—amenities would add less than \$20,000 to the cost of the home. It was a solid offering, but it lacked some of the entertainment features the couple had their hearts set on. To learn what other features they could afford, the Kings met with Craig Stulce at the Safe & Sound Systems technology design center. There, they were introduced to a broad spectrum of possibilities. "As we do with any client, we talked with Kelly and Sydney about how they planned to use each room of their house and how electronics could fit into those activities," explains Stulce. "After that initial meeting our company put together a system based on the Kings' wish list, complete with ballpark prices." Working off that plan, Stulce and the homeowners started to prioritize, adjust and omit features to reach a budget that Kelly and Sydney were comfortable with. "We went pie in the sky and then reeled everything back down to reality," Kelly recalls.

Comfort Level

The Kings' high-tech reality tacked on an extra \$70,000 to the \$20,000 they had already spent on their builder's standard fare of electronic upgrades. The additions included a sophisticated whole-house audio and video distribution system, three high-definition flat-panel TVs, a pair of surround-sound systems, a bevy of audio and video components (including a media server, XM radio tuner and 400-disc DVD changer), dozens of in-ceiling speakers, and a home management system that would allow the family to control every electronic device from multiple handheld remotes and built-in touchscreens around the house.

"It was important to us to choose systems that we could envision using every day, versus putting in systems just because they were cool," says Kelly. With Stulce's guidance, the Kings were able to key in on several technologies that would truly enhance their lifestyle. "We have music going all the time," says Sydney. "Kelly likes to listen to XM radio stations in his office, and when the kids get home from school, they'll cue up a song on the media server to play in the family room. Then, when it's dinnertime, we might put on something we all like."

A similar scenario unfolds when the family watches video. They can view recordings on any of the home's three DVR satellite receivers (one for Mom, one for Dad and one for the kids) or movies loaded in the 400-disc DVD changer on any of the home's nine TVs. Finding a good movie or song is a piece of cake, thanks to the Control4 audio/video distribution system. Using a Control4 handheld remote, the Kings can pull up their music or video libraries on the screen of a nearby TV. From there they can navigate to a program or album of their choosing and tell the system where to deliver it. And with three satellite DVRs, there's always a receiver free to record something onto. "If I'm going to record a Jazz game on my DVR, the kids can still record whatever they want on their DVR," Kelly explains. "And if the boys are playing

Money-Saving Moves

Kelly and Sydney King were able to cut their electronics expenses by doing several things, such as:

- Using what they already owned. The Kings brought the three flat-panel TVs they had used in their previous home to their new residence. "Some installers might frown upon that, but we didn't mind," says Safe & Sound Systems installer Craig Stulce. "We evaluated the TVs and determined that the sets could be integrated into the Control4 control system. Sometimes a TV may not have the codes behind them to allow control systems to operate them, but these did."
- Limiting the number of touchscreens. The Kings' original electronics plan called for a \$700 touchscreen in every room. Swapping all but two screens for \$150 handheld remotes lopped a sizeable chunk off the bill.
- Waiting it out. The home was prewired to support a variety of systems, but Kelly and Sydney incorporated only what made sense for the family now. "We'll add speakers and computers to the kids' rooms when we're ready," says Sydney. "The wiring is already there, so it'll be an easy upgrade."

games on the TV in the rec room, the girls can be watching something on the family room TV, and I can always go to the bedroom to watch my recordings there."

Although the system feeds a steady supply of entertainment content to the family, nothing detracts from the home's clean, modern decor. Most of the equipment, except for a DVD player in the family room and one in the master bedroom, are tucked into a central equipment rack in the basement laundry room. The wiring that Safe & Sound installed while the home was being built transports the audio and video signals all over the residence, traveling as far as the speakers perched above the hot tub on the deck outside the master suite.

Parental Rights

As easy as it is to turn on movies and music anywhere in the house, it's the ability to turn everything off that has Sydney smiling the most. "When there are three kids in the house, there are bound to be music, lights and TVs

EQUIPMENT LIST

CONTROL

Control4 TSI-3.8C1 Ethernet Mini Touchscreens (2)
 Control4 AVM-HTC1 Home Theater Automation Controller (5)
 Control4 AVM-MC1-B Media Automation Controller
 Control4 KPZ-3B1-A wireless 3-button keypads (4)
 Control4 KPZ-6B1-A wireless 6-button keypads (2)
 Control4 CCZ-TI-W wireless thermostats (2)

SECURITY

GE Security System
 Knox Video RSII-RGB/VO 16x16 routing switcher

STRUCTURED WIRING & NETWORKING SYSTEM

GE Smart Connection wiring panels (2)
 Linksys WRT54G wireless router
 Linksys 16-port network switch
 Unicom FEP32008T1 8-port network switches (2)

AUDIO AND VIDEO COMPONENTS

Panasonic 15-inch LCD TVs (2)
 Sony KDL-52XBR2 52-inch Bravia XBR flat-panel 1080p TV
 Sony KDL-40V2500 40-inch Bravia flat-panel 1080p TV
 Sony KDL-46V2500 46-inch Bravia flat-panel 1080p TV
 Sony DVP-CX777ES/B 400-disc megachanger
 Dish Network VIP622 DVR dual-tuner high-def DVRs (3)
 Onkyo DV-SP404 single-disc DVD players (2)
 Sony SLVN750 stereo VCR
 Integra DTR-7 7.1 surround-sound receiver
 Integra DTR-4 6.1 surround-sound receiver
 Dish Network Dish 1000
 Control4 AVM-16A2-B multichannel amplifiers (2)
 Control4 AVM-16S1-B audio matrix switch
 Control4 AVM-TUN1X-B dual AM/FM tuners with XM tuner

SPEAKERS

Klipsch Cinema 6 six-speaker system
 SpeakerCraft CRS8-One 8-inch in-ceiling speakers (8)
 SpeakerCraft AIM8-One 8-inch in-ceiling speakers (2)
 SpeakerCraft BassX-10 10-inch powered subwoofer
 Artison S-LCR/UMB Sketch LCR speakers for flat-panel TV

MOUNTS & RACKS

Middle Atlantic equipment racks
 Omnimount wall mounts for flat-panel TVs
 Integra rack mount kits

POWER & SURGE PROTECTION

APC BE500R battery backup and surge protectors (3)
 APC PH8VT3 8-port surge protector
 APC H15 120-volt power conditioners (2)
 APC PF11VNT3 11-port surge protector

CONTACT

ELECTRONICS DESIGN AND INSTALLATION:

Safe & Sound Systems, Draper, UT
 ARCHITECT: JAL Architects, Salt Lake City, UT
 BUILDER: Luttmner Custom Homes, Salt Lake City, UT



left on,” she explains. “When we’re watching a movie in the family room, the kids will go get a drink or snacks and leave the kitchen light on or they’ll leave the music playing in the kitchen when they go to bed. With the Control4 remote, I can turn off the lights from the couch and the music off from the master bedroom.”

The lights exhibit another practical benefit by teaming up with the GE security system. When the smoke alarms or burglar alarm trips, the lights react by illuminating a pathway to exits or flashing certain fixtures to scare away the intruder.

Pushing the Envelope

Having lived with the Control4 home man-

The homeowners didn’t forget about the kids when they designed their 5,000-square-foot house. They mounted a 46-inch Sony Bravia 1080p TV and Klipsch Cinema 6 speakers on the wall where they’d be out of harm’s way.

agement system for less than a year, the Kings admit that they’ve only brushed the surface in terms of what the system can do. “We’re hoping to do more sophisticated setups with the lights and to work the thermostats into our routines a bit more,” says Sydney. Until then, the Kings are happy having a convenient and affordable way to enjoy TV programs, movies and music throughout their house. **EH**