

# Bridging the Gap

How home technology education can ease your concerns and allow you to capitalize on this growing trend

By Holly Maenhout

**The pages of Electronic Lifestyles® are filled with some of the most astonishing applications of technology available in today's residential market.** These award-winning projects show the full range of what is possible in the modern connected home.

To the eyes of the tech-friendly homeowner, these systems can be mesmerizing. But for many architects, builders, designers and related professionals, the sheer scope of such projects can inspire a bit of apprehension.

In part, the concern lies in the process. What is my responsibility? How will the system affect the home's aesthetics? How will it affect the timeline?

But another aspect that gives some design and build professionals pause is the challenge of communicating about the systems in the first place. When technology innovations are hitting the market at a lightning pace, how can one develop and maintain a practical knowledge of the options available?

## Speaking the Language

As consumer adoption of home electronic systems continues to grow, one of the greatest benefits of understanding technology is the ability to position yourself as a knowledgeable resource. The objective is not, for example, to

### Technology Education from CEDIA



To strengthen collaboration between electronic systems professionals and the design and build industry, CEDIA has developed 11 courses designed to help architects, builders, designers and related professionals increase their understanding of home technology.

The courses are available through CEDIA's Registered Outreach Instructor (ROI) program, which trains CEDIA members to deliver regionalized home technology education. The courses are offered at no charge by qualified CEDIA members across the U.S. and Canada. Members of eight major design and build industry associations can receive continuing education credit for

their attendance.

According to Peggy Ward, CEDIA's industry outreach education manager, the ROI courses are designed to provide a beginner-to-intermediate level of education on a variety of electronic systems topics.

"The goal is for design and build professionals to be able to speak knowledgeably with their clients about technology, make informed suggestions, and establish relationships with professionals in the residential technology market," said Ward.

Professionals interested in attending courses can learn more and locate an ROI in their area by visiting [www.cedia.org/roi](http://www.cedia.org/roi).



Tony Crasi, Crasi Company

pinpoint what makes the next generation of lighting control more advanced than the last, but to convey the broader benefits of one-touch scene setting to the convenience-minded homeowner.

Architect and builder Tony Crasi of Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio-based Crasi Company says having an understanding of technology has enabled him to suggest solutions that differentiate his firm from competitors.

He recently spoke with a client who was helping his mother plan a handicapped-accessible addition. The client had built a relationship with a larger architect and wanted to know if Crasi would collaborate with the firm.

In the course of conversation, Crasi described to the client a system he had recently learned about—a health-monitoring system designed to support elderly homeowners who wish to stay in their homes longer. The technology piqued the client's interest, and Crasi's knowledge of the system's capabilities was ultimately enough to keep the project solely in the hands of his company.

"The client had a relationship with one of the largest firms in the country," said Crasi, "but because I was able to present this solution, we got the job."

## Streamlined Design & Execution

Architects, builders and designers often express concerns about how technology will affect a home's design and construction. Home technology education can help square the role of the design and build team with that of the electronic systems contractor and outline how the disciplines can collaborate from start to finish to achieve common goals. Understanding the core makeup of a home theater, for example, will help design and build professionals understand how the system can be tailored to suit the client's needs through thoughtful design considerations and product selection.

According to Crasi, familiarizing himself with the home technology process has helped him better coordinate project scheduling and oversee the interaction of subcontractors. It has also helped him spot the details the build team needs to account for in order to get the job done right the first time.

## Dispelling Concerns & Myths

A common misconception is that advanced technology is intended only for advanced technophiles. In reality, while a small percentage of homeowners consider themselves tech enthusiasts, most adopt technology for the day-to-day convenience, entertainment, and safety it provides.

Crasi says part of the breakthrough for him was realizing each system exists as a solution to a homeowner's problem. "If you understand the applications of the technology and what the components do, you can find out what the customer's problems are and solve those problems using technology," said Crasi. "Technology doesn't exist in a vacuum." ■