

Nine cool ways to update your home entertainment system

By Margaret Carroll-Bergman

Independent Editor

Spring is time to sort through the clutter in your life. Even if you don't suffer from "hoarder disorder," but find that your life is being taken over by DVDs and CDs that are populating your counters and tabletops, it might be time to get organized.

And, one way to achieve bliss in organizing your CDs and DVDs and to curb the miles of cable that snake around your house, is to update your home entertainment system.

Michael Alpert, owner of Nantucket Media Systems, has been in the business of home theaters for almost seven years. While entertainment systems can be costly, Alpert offers nine low-cost tips to update and organize your media and get rid of multiple cable boxes, DVD and CD players.

1. Hide your flat screen TV with a painting instead of a shade. "Before the plasma TV looked like a grand piano in the room," said Alpert, who has a baby grand piano in his living room. "The painting changes the feel of the room. There is no TV to stare at. No TV to say, 'turn me on.'"

2. Send music around the house. With a multi-zone system, your children can listen to Woody Guthrie in the family room, while your husband listens to Johnny Cash and the Tennessee Three in the backyard. This frees you to sing "Summertime" along with Janis Joplin in the kitchen. Musical tastes vary from family to family, but you get the picture.

3. A chicken in every pot. According to Alpert, most islanders have as at least one TV per room. Some island homes have as many as 10 TVs. Instead of a cable box for each television, Alpert suggests a central location where all the TVs feed into one system. "You'd be able to record shows at this location and send the same or a different show to each TV in the house," said Alpert. "The same is true with videos that would be stored in this one central location, usually on a server in the basement."



PHOTOS BY ALICIA HULL

Find the TV. This landscape on canvas (above) rolls up to reveal (right) a plasma TV underneath.

4. Apple TV stores photos and music and allows one to buy and rent movies. "You can purchase a video and store it on Apple TV," said Alpert. "It also gets your photos off the computer onto a venue where they will be seen more often."

5. Clean up your video library with Kaleidoscope. Kaleidoscope is a product that allows you to copy your DVDs and store them on a server. You can sort your movies by different fields such as by actor, genre, cover art or release date.

6. Control your lighting from your iPhone. Set your light bulbs on a different percentage, for example, 90 percent or 10 percent lighting. Turn off lights from any room in the house or set the mood for a party, dinner or reading.

7. iPod on steroids. Alpert recommends storing your music on a server. "If I have a client who works in Boston and they have a music

Control your lights, TV and music with your iPhone.



server, they can upload their CD in Boston and send their music to Nantucket," Alpert said. "It is all about convenience."

8. A Jack-in-the-Box. If you want to hide your TV in a box or a wooden chest or have it pop out of the floor,

Alpert can design this feature for you.

9. iPhone applications. There are 17 million iPhones and 1 billion iPhone applications. Alpert was able to produce the New York City subway map and turn off his TV from his iPhone. ■

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