

Nerdify Your New Home

It is not uncommon for newly built homes to include a feature called structured wiring. This is the infrastructure that distributes data, voice, and video signals throughout your home. In a way all homes with a phone line run into them contain an immature level of structured wiring. What sets this first idea of structured wiring apart from a more modern day structured wired home is the number of utilities serviced and the flexibility to make changes to your system from one centralized media box. So what exactly is structured wiring?

Structured wiring starts off with a media box, similar looking to a breaker box. Media boxes can vary in size depending on how many services and number of rooms you plan to serve. Normal sizes may vary between 18 inches tall by 16 inches wide for a smaller media center to 36 inches tall by 16 inches wide for a more robust media center. Your media box will be the gateway for your data, voice and video signals. Your phone, cable, or satellite companies will bring their main lines into this box. From there, you can distribute those signals anyway you see fit through Cat 5e and/or RG 6 cable throughout the house. These two types of cables can transmit virtually every type of data, voice or video signal anywhere in the house.

Ok great, structured wiring provides a centralized location that ties your data, voice and video together, how does that help anyone? Great question. The real value in structured wiring is that you can modify your media center when technology changes and customize what the media center can do for you.

A media center equipped with a router connected to a cable or DSL modem will allow you to share your Internet connection, data, and printers with everyone else in the house. You can also connect your home theatre system to your media center and by using a modulator you can create your own movie channel. Simply put a DVD or VHS tape into your entertainment system and then turn on any television in the house to the channel your modulator is set to and presto one DVD player works on any number of televisions in the home. If home security is an issue, you can wire small home security cameras into the media box and watch your homes exterior from any television in the house. Or, for new parents use that same security camera to watch your baby sleep using the picture-in-picture (PIP) feature of your television while watching a movie in the den, bedroom, or even your garage if you wanted to.

Costs for installing a structured wiring system can be very broad depending on the elaborateness of the system. In general adding a basic system to a new construction home can cost as little as a few hundred dollars. This may include a small media center, a voice distribution block, video distribution block, router, cable, and a couple dozen RJ11 phone jacks, RJ45 keystone jacks, and video coaxial connectors for a typical four-bedroom house. In many cases professional installation may not be much more.

Structured wiring isn't a passing fade; it is becoming as necessary as water pipes and electric lines. I'm sure there will be a time when a potential buyer for your home will be more concerned about the quality of the media center than the age of the carpet. If you have any technology related questions call Thomas, Roger, or Scott at 947-0749 or e-mail me at sales@computerdepotonline.com.