

by Mike Ohman

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Today, we have more choices in electronic systems than ever before. People routinely spend a great deal of time and money and still not get the capabilities or quality they were expecting. With systems easily costing thousands of dollars, avoiding some of these mistakes will save you time, money, and frustration.

## 10. Failing to plan = Planning to fail

Wiring for electronic systems is usually not part of the design and planning of construction projects. Lots of people claim to be experts, but don't make the mistake of taking them at their word; do your homework. For instance, if they don't have a dozen or more industry certifications prominently posted in their offices and on their website, find someone who does.

Ask to see systems under construction, examples of system documentation and ask to see their testing and verification equipment. If any of this looks amiss or worse yet does not exist, walk away.

If your builder says something like "our guy can run any kind of wire you want", be very wary. Since 2004 we have been asked to re-do an average of 4 systems per month, all installed by so called "experts".

Electricians are typically professionals who are good at what they do, but very few have invested the time and expense to learn electronic systems contracting. They may be able to drill a hole in a stud and pull a wire through that hole beautifully, heck, I own a hammer; but you don't want me building your house. Same with electronic systems contracting; easy to do an OK job, but it is another thing altogether to do a great job, and like the rest of your home you want things done perfectly.

## 9. Wiring mistakes

We see brand new expensive homes being wired to standards we abandoned in the last century! We routinely get calls from competitors asking if we have certain products in stock, products we stopped using years ago!

*See our before and after section in our portfolio for photographic proof...*

## 8. Don't buy the latest and greatest

Early adopters of new technology usually get very little long term value. Most people in the electronics industry are geeks, and get excited about the latest and greatest technology. They also want to convince you to buy into this thinking. If you have a feeling this is happening to you, find someone who is a little more pragmatic and thinking long term, it will pay off in spades.

## 7. Aesthetics

This is often an overlooked concept. Ugly equipment and systems that the whole family finds difficult to is unacceptable. Everything should be neat and tidy, aesthetically pleasing and more. There are literally hundreds of options on the market that help make systems easy to live with, insist on this for your home.

## **6. Letting your home technology control you**

There is no reason to have 4 or 5 remote controls on the coffee table. Your entire family should be able to easily control your home's entertainment systems.

However, universal remote controls are not created equal, and they all need to be programmed properly. This is where many people go wrong and hire an inexperienced person, the result is never good.

Ask to see a working system and see if you can operate it with few if any instructions. If you cannot, find someone who can.

## **5. Not doing your homework**

Mike Holmes, of the Holmes on Holmes TV show is fond of saying "80% of contractors either don't know enough or don't care enough. See our before and after photographs on our website for examples, and remember you'll be living with these systems for years to come.

## **4. Setup mistakes**

Just buying the top of the line model will not get you top of the line performance. For instance, televisions have their contrast and brightness settings set at 100% which gives them the best chance of looking good in a typical electronics store. We all want a bright picture, but leaving a television set up like this will prematurely wear it out, and the picture will look terrible to boot.

A modest audio video system properly designed and calibrated will out-perform a poorly done expensive system every time, and that is real value!

## **3. Security. . .not just for the corporate network**

Security is a vital requirement for every system and every network, period. You don't have to go to extremes, but straightforward, common sense network configuration will protect your personal information. Do not assume the Cable Company or Telephone Company or Electrician will do this properly, or at all, in fact you are better to assume the opposite.

## **2. Technology for technology's sake**

There are many systems on the market, all claiming to be the finest / most advanced / best value and more. Take the time to get a professional evaluation of your needs and to learn the differences between some of these systems. They all sound wonderful when you read the brochure or their website, but they are not created equal.

## **1. Sometimes hiring a professional is the best option**

If you are going to invest in any type of system, from home theatre to whole house audio to home automation and more, there are many things to consider. There are highly trained experts with years of experience that can help, but remember Mike Holmes' 80% rule.

*Mike Ohman is the owner of Beyond Audio in Kelowna BC. They are dedicated to providing the professional focus required to equip today's modern buildings with reliable, state of the art electronic systems. You can contact Mike at 250-860-992 extension 2, or a via e-mail at [info@beyondaudio.com](mailto:info@beyondaudio.com)*