



# THE WRIGHT STUFF

Mike Wright  
Owner of Sound FX

Sound FX's Mike Wright shows how easy it can be to make your home even smarter than you are

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**A**s you roll up on the impeccably manicured cedar-shingle house set in one of the more exclusive communities of Rehoboth Beach, you know you're about to enter a pretty special home. It's bright, airy, impeccably decorated (by the owner's mother) and boasts an amazing collection of antique coin-operated arcade games that hail from as far back as the turn of the century (the 20th century, that is). What's less obvious is that Sound FX of Lewes sent in Mike Wright to essentially supercharge the home with the latest and greatest in home-automation technology. And to hear the client talk about it, you'd think Wright, a managing partner of Sound FX, were some diabolical cross between Bill Gates and the Wizard of Oz.

"I've dealt with a lot of contractors in my time — and I mean a *lot*," said the client, a Virginia-based real estate developer, "and let me tell you, Mike Wright and Sound FX are at the absolute top of his industry. I didn't necessarily start out looking for such a sophisticated setup, but that's just because I wasn't really aware of what the possibilities were. Mike came in and laid out with such clarity and enthusiasm what was possible and why it was desirable. Suffice it to say, I and my family are totally thrilled with the result — not only because of Mike's brilliant



With a combination of seven cameras deployed inside and out, this homeowner can rest assured that his seaside sanctuary is safe and sound.

work but also because it's crystal clear from the start that Mike's ultimate concern is customer satisfaction. I like to tell people that when it comes to this kinda stuff, if you can dream it, Mike can do it!"

And what he did was substantial. He began by setting up the spectacular 4,000 sq. ft. residence with a Control4 home-automation system. Control4 is a cutting-edge provider of smart-home operating systems, delivering intelligent control over consumer electronics products, appliances and networking systems via an easy-to-use software interface. Though Wright is equipped to install and program all of the major home-automation, or "smart home," software systems on the market, he ultimately selects the one he feels is the best match for a client based on their specific goals and budget.

"What I like about Control4 is that it's 'ready for prime-time,' as I like to say," offered Wright, whose company's customer-service perks include after-hours tech support. "Some of the comparable software programs on the market have lots of interesting bells and whistles, but they're buggy, unreliable and sometimes downright difficult to operate, especially for a typical homeowner. Control4, by contrast, is evolved enough that it's good to go practically out of the box, in addition to being dependable and user-friendly. In fact, this client's system is easily operated by his kids as well as his parents, so you basically have people from six to 60 using this technology with no issues whatsoever. I think it may just be the best dollar value on the market for this kind of product."

Placed throughout the house at strategic locations are seven interactive control locations, each with its own 7-inch touch-screen LCD with clear display and intuitively sensible icons. There are also three controlled video locations — deployed in the master suite, game room and family room — which can activate, modify and even override all other systems. That means that if your kids are so engrossed by their current World of Warcraft session that they've ignored your three separate calls to dinner, you can simply end the game for them and shut off the TV from any one of the controlled video locations (though don't expect to win any popularity contests around the house for a while).


It also means that if you were throwing your greatest party ever, you could set the perfect mood lighting, ideal climate, type of music (whether it's CDs, iTunes, Rhapsody, Pandora or satellite radio) and its volume for any other, and in every other, room of the house. Think of how much fun it would be to hear Mozart in the dining room, Motown in the living room and Marley on the patio — all at the same time but with each at a discreet and independently controlled volume level that doesn't encroach on any other room's ambiance. This particular client of Wright's has 14 separate audio zones and four big subwoofers in his house, basically setting the stage for some party power that would make Hugh Hefner look like just another octogenarian but with fancier pajamas.

With Control4, Wright's client also can monitor and operate the home's security system, which includes data storage from seven different cameras, both inside and outside the house. This way, you'll never have to wonder again who finished the leftover Chinese food even though no one admitted to it... just hit "rewind." And as we all know, with security comes peace of mind, and you be able to have much more of that if Sound FX does for you what Wright did for this client, which is to place the entire system on automatic battery backup, so even a power outage wouldn't affect your household activities for at least a couple of hours after the interruption. In fact, Wright even went so far as to create redundant Internet-access systems, which for you would mean the next time your cable goes down — as his once did for four days — it's all good, because your online capability will automatically switch to a DSL platform that will let you keep Facebooking your face off, if that's your thing.



The home's master suite is one of three locations that feature a controlled video location, which can control or override every other system in the house.

And to think, you can manage all of this state-of-the-art technology without even being on the premises, since Control4 allows users the capacity to access and manipulate their systems from anywhere in the world, with anything that can get online, including laptops, iPads, iPhones and Blackberrys. So, the next time you're headed from your primary residence to your Eastern Shore summer house, get it ready for you by setting the climate, adjusting the lights, queuing the music, checking the cameras, turning off the alarm and even unlocking the doors (including deadbolts) while you're en route. Wright likes to call that grouping of conveniences his "peace-of-mind package."

"The only thing this system doesn't do for you," Wright quipped, "is cook your meals and do the dishes... but give us time!" 

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