

# Time to **Cut** the Cords

With the big trend in technology focusing on going wireless, the experts at Redfli Electronics walk you through the many options available in wireless speaker systems.

WORDS Jennifer Blomquist • PHOTOS Jeffrey Crane & provided







It's known as the wireless experience.

"Apple® really pushed that to the forefront recently when it came out with the new iPhone 7, which did away with the headphone jack. This is a big deal because tons of people listen to their music using traditional headphones – you know, the ones with cords," says Joel Usina, Director of Marketing for Redfli Electronics. "The push now is to have a wireless headset. It's definitely the direction we're headed."

In terms of speakers, Usina points out that wireless options have been around for years.

"Most people today are familiar with the concept of Bluetooth® connectivity, which falls under the category of a wireless experience. However, the wireless speaker systems Redfli sells and installs are connected to your home's network (wifi), which is far superior to a Bluetooth® connection

and open up much more control over what is played through the speakers."

Getting started with wireless audio systems begins with picking the right product for your space.

## SONOS

"Sonos is one of the most well-known brands of wireless. Its base model, the PLAY:1, costs \$199, is relatively small in size, but puts out a surprisingly big sound. From there, the next size speaker in the lineup is the PLAY:3 and then the PLAY:5. Sonos also has the PLAYBAR (soundbar) and Sub, which, when put together with your TV, create a phenomenal entertainment space. Despite there being no speaker wires, each speaker does need power, which means there is a cord that needs to be plugged into the wall."

## BLUESOUND

"Bluesound speakers are a step or two up from Sonos, both in terms of price and quality. It has the same size units as Sonos, including a soundbar and sub, but offers a few products with better features. For example, Bluesound's Vault 2 is a device that rips your CDs in a high-resolution format (FLAC) and allows you to play those CDs or stream any music service through any entertainment set-up in your house via Bluesound's app on your smartphone. When it comes to sound quality, Bluesound speakers come equipped with hardware that can stream music at a higher resolution than Sonos, giving you true 'studio quality' sound."

## PLACEMENT & CONTROL

"These kinds of speakers are often placed on a table or a countertop, which is one of the great things about them. They can go wherever you want them. They can also be mounted on

the wall or even concealed in a custom casing for a more preferred aesthetic."

"No matter where they are in the house, because you are connected to your home's network, you can control the speakers through your smartphone, as opposed to Bluetooth®, which has a limited range. Beyond being able to access and stream any music service from your phone (e.g. Pandora, Apple Music, Spotify), you can also play any radio station and even access music from your computer's hard drive if it's up and running, of course. The capabilities are pretty remarkable and extremely convenient. I think this is just the beginning of what will one day be considered standard."

"We have wireless speakers all over our house – in our kitchen, in our basement, in our bathroom and under our TV," says Jared Sickafoose, Vice President of Operations. "The one in our bedroom is great because

the app comes with an alarm that we use which plays the music we want to hear when it's time to wake up."

"People love audio zones throughout their house, but if speakers are not hardwired prior to the house being built, it's incredibly expensive to retrofit that type of system. In such cases, these wireless speakers are the best, easiest and most affordable way to create audio zones. You don't have to run wires in your walls and ceiling to accomplish the same kind of feature in your house."

## PUTTING IT TOGETHER

"The most basic way people can integrate a wireless system into their house is simply put one speaker in one room," says Usina. "Depending on your budget or preference, you can put any amount of these speakers anywhere your heart (or ears) desires. In fact, you can set up a true 5.1 or even a 7.2 surround-sound system

in your entertainment space. So, for example, with a soundbar, sub and two rear speakers, you'll have an excellent 5.1 wireless surround-sound experience at a price-point that is very competitive with comparable speakers."

"These are fairly popular systems we install for our clients," says Sickafoose. "People love the wireless experience, and with these brands, you get quality speakers and components that integrate nicely in any context. Cords can be messy and annoying and might very well become a thing of the past." *FWL*

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