

CONNECTED HOME

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OCTOBER 2015

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- > 2015 INTEGRATE EXPO WRAP-UP
- > IN-DEPTH PRODUCT REVIEWS
- > TRAINING DIARY... AND MORE



WHO
TRUMPED
THE COMPETITION?

PARTNER



CUSTOM
ELECTRONIC
DESIGN &
INSTALLATION
ASSOCIATION



THE POPULAR OPINION

THE WINNERS OF THE 2015 CONNECTED HOME MOST POPULAR AWARDS HAVE BEEN ANNOUNCED. CUE THE DRUM ROLL. PAUL SKELTON REPORTS.

Now in its fourth year, the *Connected Home Most Popular Awards* has come and gone for another 12 months. So, who won and what did we learn from the 2015 competition?

For one, Sonance, Marantz, Aiphone, Kordz, Screen Technics, Sunbrite, Epson and Middle Atlantic all appear unsurpassable; second, Amber Technology has a firm grasp on several industry leading brands; and finally, integrators aren't afraid to

vote for companies that don't actually make product that is relevant to the categories in which they are voting.

This year saw the introduction of a handful of new categories – Most Popular Collaboration Tools, Digital Modulators, HDBaseT Extender Kits, Video Conferencing and Wireless Multi-room Audio, which were all hotly contested.

There were also a couple of categories that were decided by a small handful of votes. In one case - Most Popular Remote Control - Push Controls won by just two votes. As for Most Popular Tactile Sound Transducers, Earthquake Sound beat out previous winner D-Box by just one vote.

It's important for me to remind

those companies that didn't win, these awards are purely a popularity contest. We're not saying that the winners have the best product on the market, or the newest (nor are we saying you're unpopular – just that someone else has been voted moreso).

These awards are designed to let suppliers know what integrators think of their brands. Yes, this could be based on product, but it could also include service, support, reputation, incentive schemes or your distribution model.

Already things are happening in the industry that are set to make the 2016 awards very interesting. New brands, new distribution agreements and new products that are set to launch will all affect the results next year. What are you doing? **CH**

CATEGORY	WINNER
DISTRIBUTOR	
Amber Technology	
VIDEO	
Home Theatre Projector	Epson
Projection Screen	Screen Technics
Video Processor	Crestron
Lifter	Ultralift
Flat Panel Display	Samsung
TV Mount	Vogel's
Outdoor Display	Sunbrite
Antenna	Hills
Media Server	AppleTV
Blu-ray Player	Oppo
CONTROL	
Whole-House Control System	RTI
Multi-room AV Distribution	Sonos
Remote Control	Push
Motorised Blinds	Somfy
IR Distributor/Extender	Resi-linx

CATEGORY	WINNER
AUDIO	
Freestanding Loudspeaker	KEF
'Invisible' Loudspeaker	Sonance
In-wall/in-ceiling Speaker	Sonance
Outdoor Loudspeaker	Sonance
Acoustic Treatment	Primacoustics
Subwoofer	Velodyne
AV Receiver	Integra
Preamplifier	Marantz
Wireless Multi-room Audio	Sonos
Speaker Cabling / Interconnect	AudioQuest
Soundbar	Bose
DAC	Marantz
INFRASTRUCTURE	
Matrix Switcher	Crestron
HDMI Cabling	Kordz
HDBaseT Extender Kit	Gefen
Digital Modulator	Resi-linx
Rack/Cabinet	Middle Atlantic
Cooling System	Middle Atlantic

CATEGORY	WINNER
SECURITY	
Security System	Ness
IP Security Camera	Ness
Intercom	Aiphone
SEATING	
Seating	LP Morgan
Tactile Sound Transducer	Earthquake Sound
COMMERCIAL	
Collaboration Tool	AMX
Video Conferencing Equipment	Polycom
Microphone	Sennheiser
Short Throw Projector	Epson
Digital Signage CMS	Novus Solutions
Digital Signage Player	Brightsign
ELECTRICAL	
Surge Protection	Thor Technologies
UPS	APC
Energy Monitoring	Environexus
Lighting Control	Clipsal
LED Lighting	Clipsal

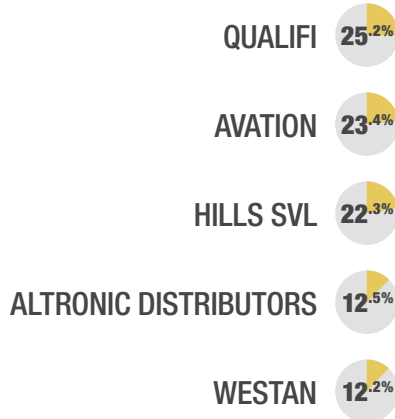


2015 CONNECTED HOME MOST POPULAR AWARDS

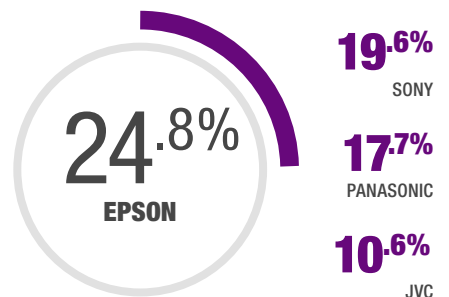
DISTRIBUTOR



Followed by Alloys (6.8%), Extron Australia (6.8%), Audio Active (6.2%), Canohm (6.2%), Avico Electronics (5.0%)



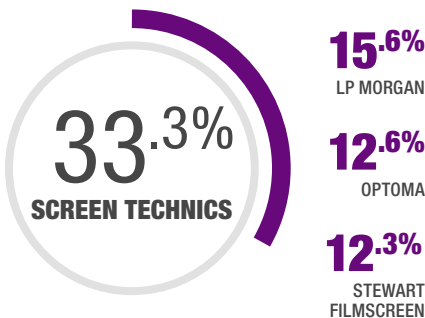
HOME THEATRE PROJECTOR



Followed by Hitachi (5.7%), Optoma (4.9%), (Mitsubishi 4.9%), NEC (4.1%), Projectiondesign (3.0%)

Riding high on its win in 2014, Epson has taken this title again. Last year's runner up, Optoma, has fallen all the way to ninth, while Sony has moved from fifth to second.

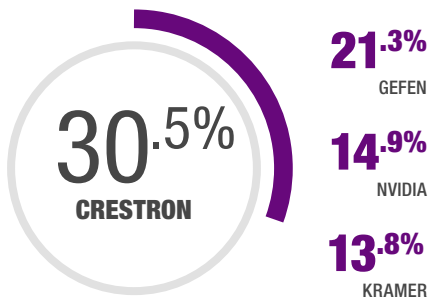
PROJECTION SCREEN



Followed by Screen Innovations (6.6%), Revtek (5.1%), Da-lite (4.8%), Screen Excellence (4.5%), Snap AV (3.0%)

Perhaps to the surprise of nobody, Screen Technics has won this category for the fourth year running, increasing its share of the votes from 27.7% in 2014 to 33.3% in 2015. After a dip last year, Stewart has reclaimed fourth place.

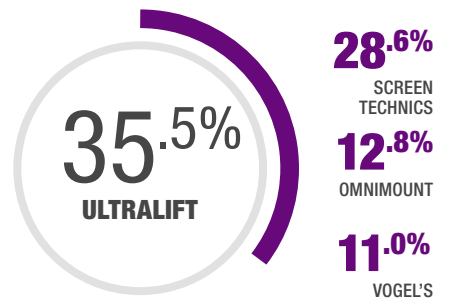
VIDEO PROCESSOR



Followed by Savant (5.0%), Lumagen (2.8%)

After coming third last year, with 18.6% of the vote, Crestron has dominated the field in 2015. Last year's winner, Gefen, has moved to second while Nvidia has increased its share from 8.4% to 14.9%.

LIFTER



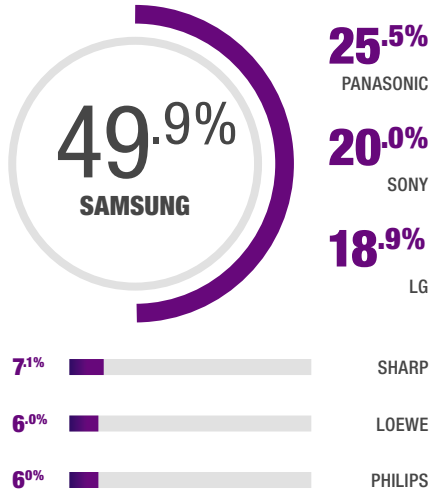
Followed by Gilkin (5.9%), People of Lava (5.5%)

For the fourth year running, Australian supplier Ultralift has been named Most Popular Lifter by readers of *Connected Home*; however, Screen Technics has made further ground on 2014 to be within 7% of victory.



2015 CONNECTED HOME MOST POPULAR AWARDS

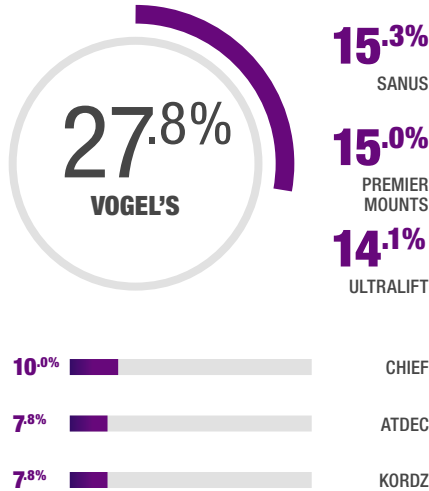
FLAT PANEL DISPLAY



Followed by JVC (3.3%), Metz (1.4%)

Where some categories are close, others aren't. This one wasn't. With twice as many votes of the runner up, Samsung is once again the Most Popular Flat Panel Display supplier.

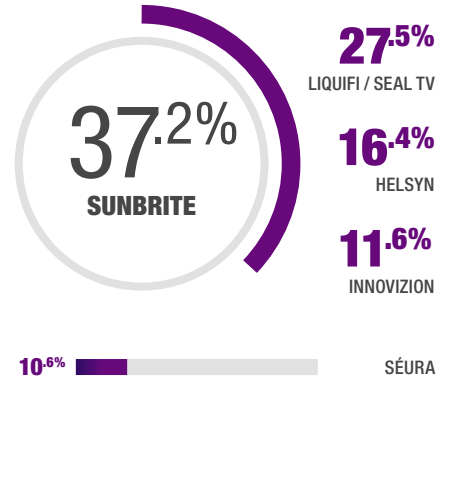
TV MOUNT



Followed by OmniMount (5.3%), Brateck (5.3%), B-Tech (5.3%), Digitek (4.7%), Loctek (4.4%)

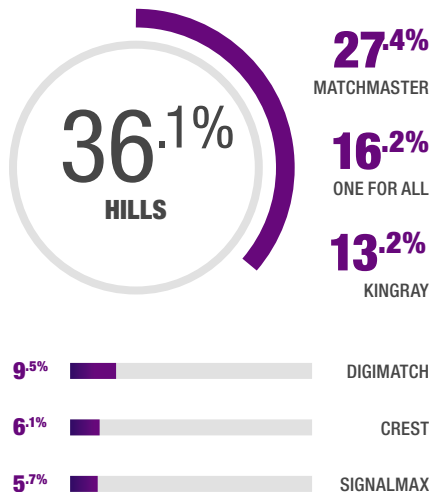
Also with twice the number of votes of the runner up is perennial favourite Vogel's. Special mention must be made of Premier Mounts, which increased from 7.2% in 2014 to 15% in 2015.

OUTDOOR DISPLAY



In 2015, the Most Popular Outdoor Display category remains largely unchanged, with Sunbrite once again being victorious; however, Liquifi, perhaps thanks to the introduction of Seal TV, has closed the gap.

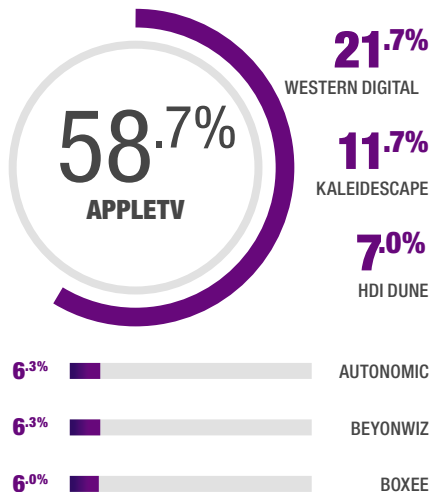
ANTENNA



Followed by Ikusi (4.7%), Fracarro (3.7%)

In 2015, Hills has extended its lead over the competition from 29.9% to 36.1%. Matchmaster remains a healthy second while One For All has shot up from 8.7% in 2014 to 16.2% in 2015.

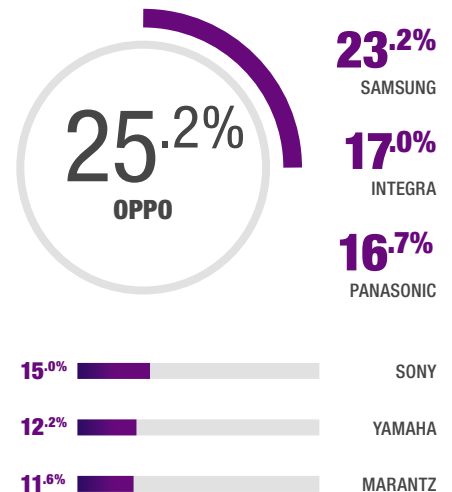
MEDIA SERVER



Followed by Sooloos (3.3%), HD Ryan (2.3%), Vidabox (1.7%), Mozaex (1.3%)

Nobody would have seen this coming - Apple won Most Popular Media Server. Again. And it increased its lead. Again. Perennial bridesmaid WD also increased its share from 17.5% to 21.7%.

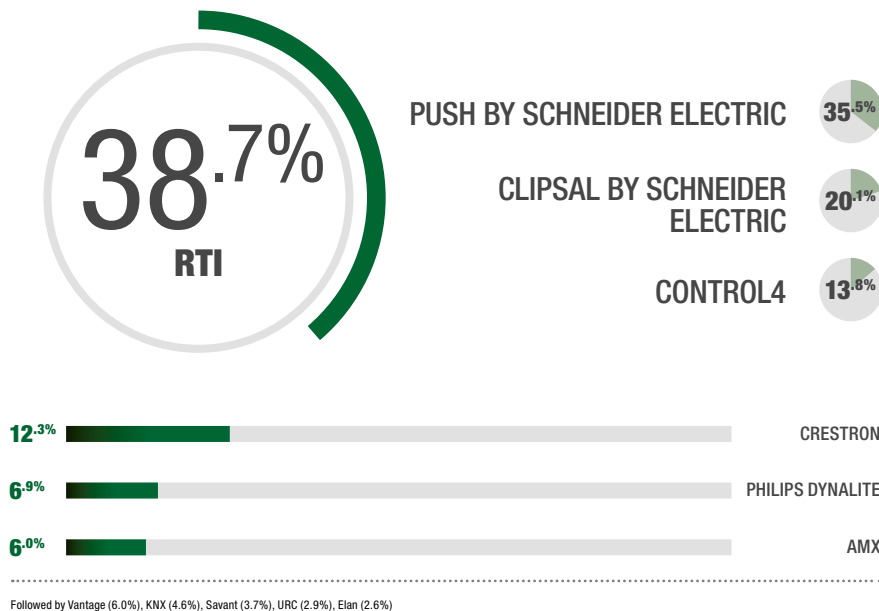
BLU-RAY PLAYER



Followed by Denon (10.8%), Pioneer (9.3%), Cambridge Audio (5.7%)

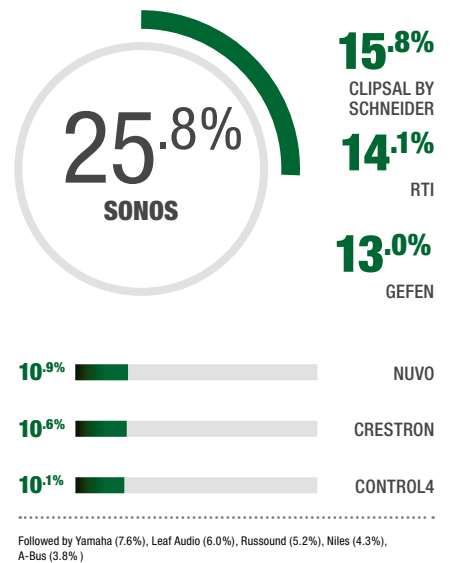
While Oppo was of course going to win this category again, Samsung has moved into a solid second place, just a handful of votes away from a win.

WHOLE-HOUSE CONTROL SYSTEM



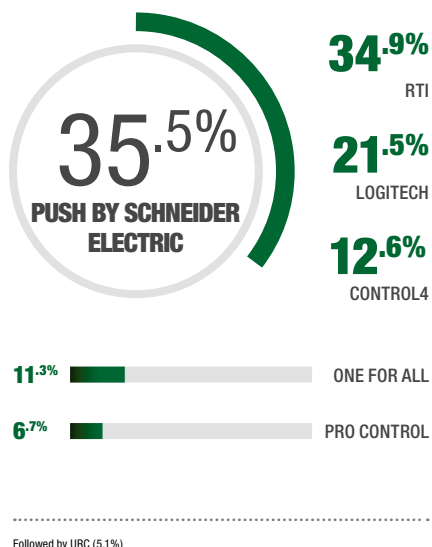
RTI has once again claimed the title of Most Popular Whole-House Control System, increasing its vote by 10%. Push remains in second place while Clipsal moved from fifth place to third.

MULTI-ROOM AV DISTRIBUTION



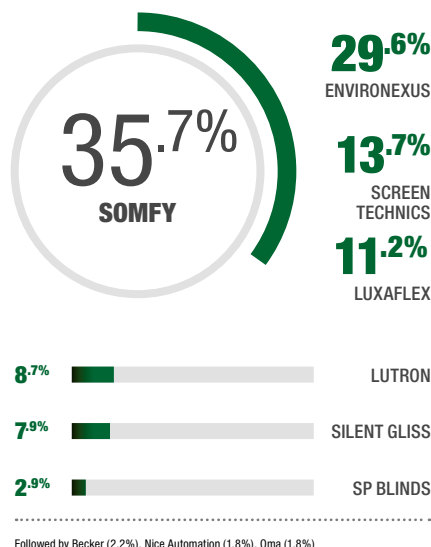
While Sonos retains the title in this category, the big mover is Clipsal, which went from seventh last year (7.4%) to second in 2015 (15.8%). Gefen also increased its share by 4%.

REMOTE CONTROL



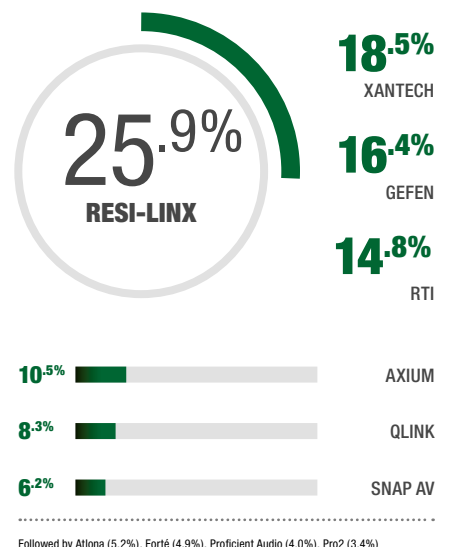
After coming in second last year, Push – now backed by Schneider Electric – has taken out its first award – the Most Popular Remote Control. It beat RTI by just two votes.

MOTORISED BLINDS



While Somfy was always going to win this category, the big mover here is Environexus, which has claimed second place, with almost a third of the vote, after not appearing on the list in 2014.

IR DISTRIBUTOR/EXTENDER

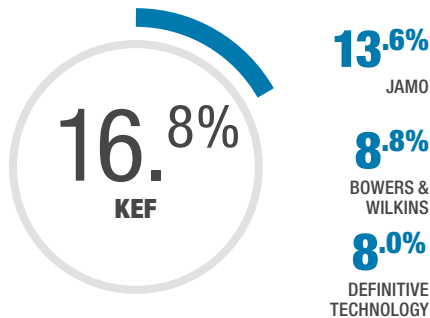


Resi-linx has gone back-to-back and been named Most Popular IR Distributor/Extender in 2015. Xantech has held steady while RTI has fallen from second to fourth.



2015 CONNECTED HOME MOST POPULAR AWARDS

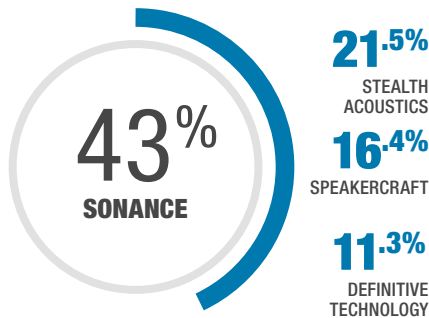
FREESTANDING LOUDSPEAKER



Followed by Klipsch (6.5%), Tannoy (6.5%), Martin Logan (5.7%), Sonus Faber (5.7%), Wharfedale (5.7%)

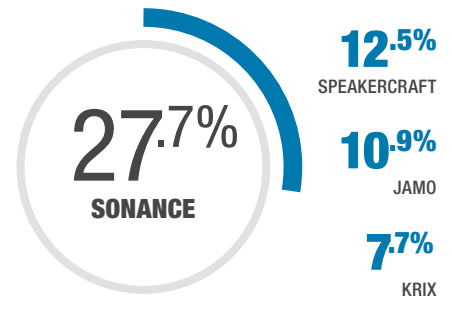
After a three-year stronghold, Jamo has been toppled by KEF loudspeakers, which came fourth in 2014. The other big mover here is Definitive Technology, which moved up from ninth in 2014 to fourth in 2015.

'INVISIBLE' LOUDSPEAKER



In 2014, Sonance won this category with 34% of the vote. In 2015, this increased to 43%. Stealth Acoustics has moved from third to second while Amina has moved from 10th place to sixth.

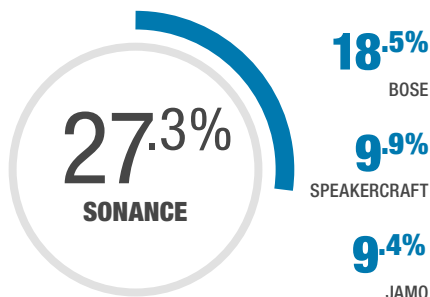
IN-WALL/IN-CEILING SPEAKER



Followed by Niles (6.9%), Paradigm (6.9%), Nuvo (6.1%), KEF (5.6%), Russound (5.1%), TruAudio (4.8%)

Once again, Sonance has taken the title of Most Popular In-Wall/In-Ceiling Speaker. SpeakerCraft and Jamo both hold their positions, too. What affect will Origin Acoustics and Beale Street Audio have in 2016?

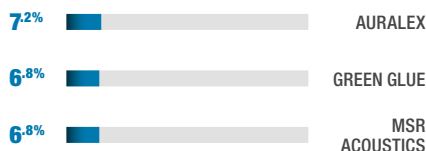
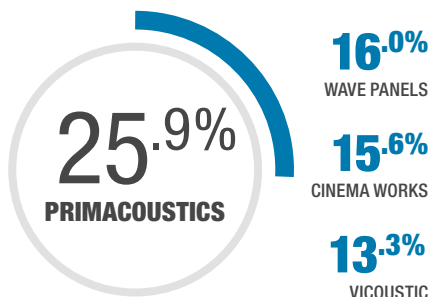
OUTDOOR LOUDSPEAKER



Followed by Definitive Technology (7.2%), Paradigm (6.6%), Bowers & Wilkins (6.1%), TruAudio (5.0%), KEF (4.4%)

Once again claiming three titles, Sonance is unstoppable. In this category, Bose has moved to second and Jamo has increased from sixth to fourth.

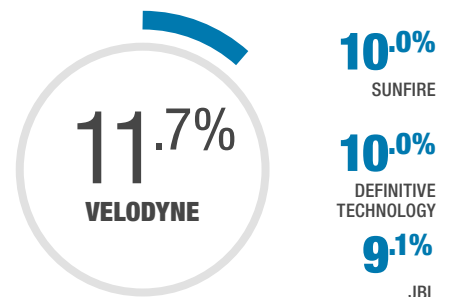
ACOUSTIC TREATMENT



Followed by Manhattan (5.7%), Mutant (5.3%), Tributaries (3.8%)

While Primacoustics retains the title, Wave Panels has shot up from fourth in 2014 to second in 2015. Auralex has moved from 11th last year to fifth.

SUBWOOFER



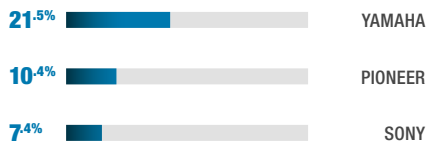
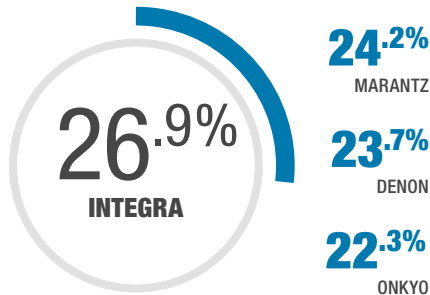
Followed by Klipsch (7.2%), Paradigm (6.7%), NHT (5.9%), KEF (5.9%)

Proving its win was no fluke, Velodyne has taken out this category for the past four years. The big mover here is again Definitive Technology (third), which came ninth in 2014.



2015 CONNECTED HOME MOST POPULAR AWARDS

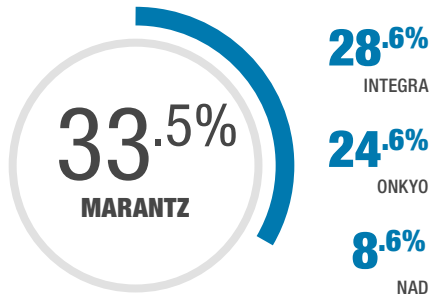
AV RECEIVER



Followed by Cambridge Audio (4.8%), Harmon Kardon (4.8%), Rotel (4.5%), Anthem (3.5%), NAD (3.2%)

The only change in the Most Popular AV Receiver category in 2015 is the transposition of Onkyo and Yamaha. Everything else remains the same, with Integra winning once again.

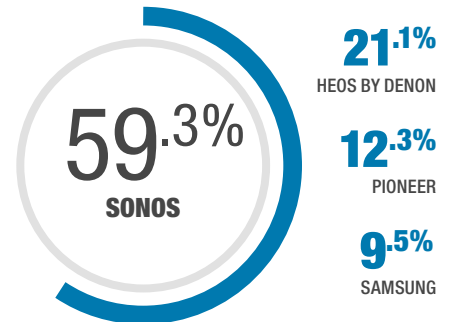
PREAMPLIFIER



Followed by Moon (4.6%), Parasound (4.3%), Audiolab (3.4%), Datasat (3.1%)

After enjoying a clear lead on the competition in 2014, Integra has fallen from first to second place, making way for Marantz to be named Most Popular Preamplifier in 2015.

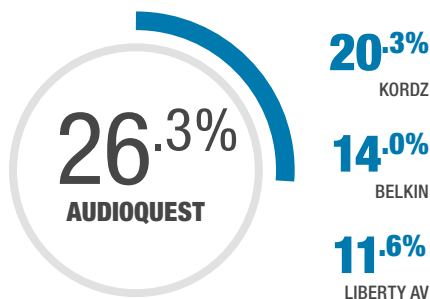
WIRELESS MULTI-ROOM AUDIO



Followed by Bluesound (3.6%), Definitive Technology (3.2%), Polk Audio (3.2%)

Despite only being on the market for a little over 12 months, Heos has shown that it is possible to compete with the ever-popular Sonos wireless multi-room audio system.

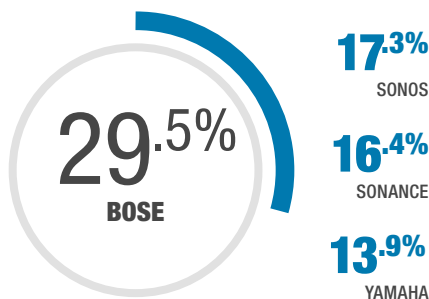
SPEAKER CABLING / INTERCONNECT



Followed by Wireworld (4.8%), Chord (4.2%), Tributaries (4.2%), Australian Monitor (3.9%), Snap AV (3.9%)

Very little has changed in the Speaker Cabling/Interconnect category. Audioquest and Kordz remain on top of the field while Belkin increased its share from 8.8% in 2014 to 14% in 2015.

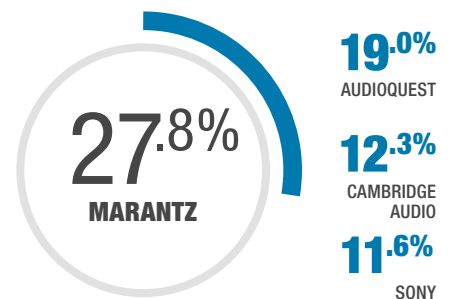
SOUNDBAR



Followed by Bowers & Wilkins (5.7%), KEF (5.1%), Paradigm (5.1%), SpeakerCraft (5.1%)

It turns out that somebody can actually beat Sonos! After dominating this category in 2015, Sonos has fallen to second place while last year's third placed Bose has almost tripled its share to be victorious.

DAC



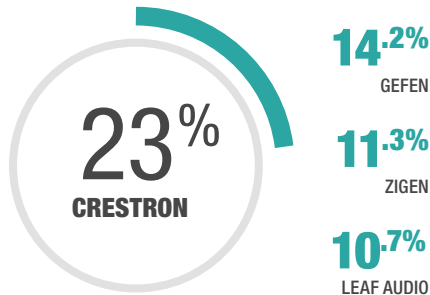
Followed by Rotel (5.3%), Chord (3.5%), Rega (3.5%), Pro-ject (3.2%)

The all important category of Most Popular DAC has once again been taken out by Marantz, which increased its vote from 17.2% in 2014 to 27.8% in 2015. Sony is the big mover – shifting from 13th last year to fourth.



2015 CONNECTED HOME MOST POPULAR AWARDS

MATRIX SWITCHER



14.2%
GEFEN

11.3%
ZIGEN

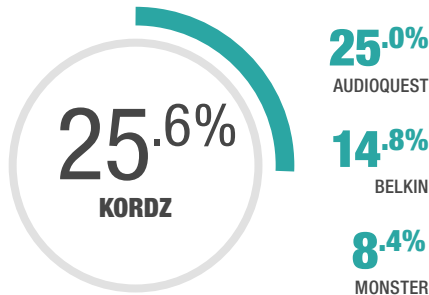
10.7%
LEAF AUDIO



Followed by Extron (6.5%), Altronic Distributors (6.1%), Wyrestorm (5.8%), Altona (5.5%), AMX (5.2%)

Last year's third place-getter, Crestron, has moved into first, to be named the 2015 Most Popular Matrix Switcher. Last year's first place-getter, Zigen, has moved into third.

HDMI CABLING



25.0%
AUDIOQUEST

14.8%
BELKIN

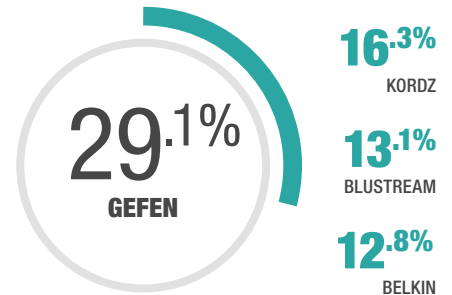
8.4%
MONSTER



Followed by Wireworld (6.6%), Crest (3.9%), OED (3.9%), Chord (3.6%), Tributaries (3.0%)

HDMI in Australia is largely synonymous with local supplier Kordz, which staved off a last minute dash by Audioquest to hold on to this title by just one vote. Belkin remains a clear third.

HDBASET EXTENDER KIT



16.3%
KORDZ

13.1%
BLUSTREAM

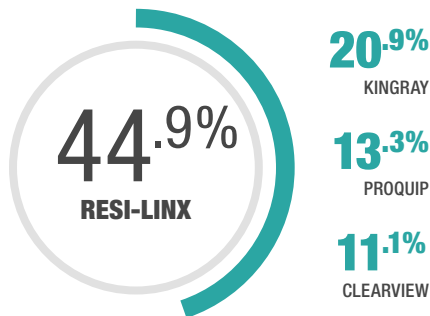
12.8%
BELKIN



Followed by Kramer (7.3%), Leaf (7.3%), Pro2 (5.2%), Intelix (4.8%)

A new category in 2015, the Most Popular HDBaseT Extender Kit title has been won by Gefen. Kordz and Blustream, which both lead the pack at some stage during the voting period, came second and third, respectively.

DIGITAL MODULATOR



20.9%
KINGRAY

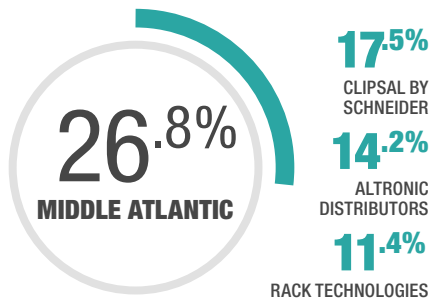
13.3%
PROQUIP

11.1%
CLEARVIEW



Another new category in 2015, the Most Popular Digital Modulator comes from Resi-Linx, which scored more than double the number of votes of second place.

RACK/CABINET



17.5%
CLIPSAL BY SCHNEIDER

14.2%
ALTRONIC DISTRIBUTORS

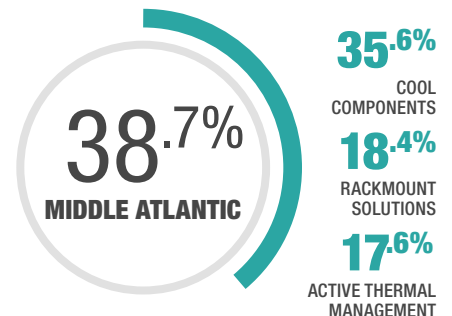
11.4%
RACK TECHNOLOGIES



Followed by B&R Enclosures (5.7%), Australian Monitor (5.7%), MFB (4.5%), Built Boards (4.2%), Cabac (4.2%)

Global powerhouse Middle Atlantic has again dominated this category, with Clipsal retaining second place. Rack Technologies moved from eighth in 2014 to fourth in 2015.

COOLING SYSTEM



35.6%
COOL COMPONENTS

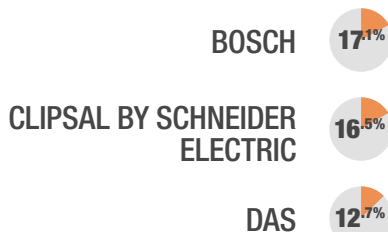
18.4%
RACKMOUNT SOLUTIONS

17.6%
ACTIVE THERMAL MANAGEMENT



While there aren't many players in the Cooling System category, two suppliers - Middle Atlantic and Cool Components - both hold the lion's share of the market.

SECURITY SYSTEM



Followed by ADSC (5.7%), Leviton Security & Automation (4.1%), Protégé (1.6%)

While Ness retains this category, the big mover here is Clipsal, which jumped from fifth to third place. Honeywell has also moved, from eighth in 2014 to fifth in 2015.

IP SECURITY CAMERA



Followed by D-Link (7.4%)

The big mover here is Bosch, which moved from fifth in 2014 to second in 2015. Mobotix jumped from seventh to third while last year's runner up, Environexus, didn't place.

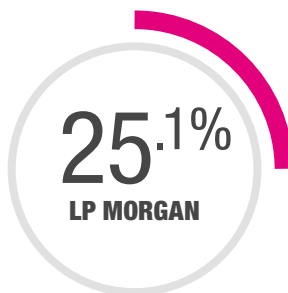
INTERCOM



Followed by Helios (7.0%), Kocom (5.3%), Mobotix (5.3%), BPT (3.5%), Savant (3.5%)

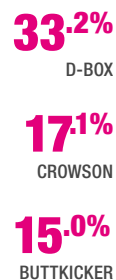
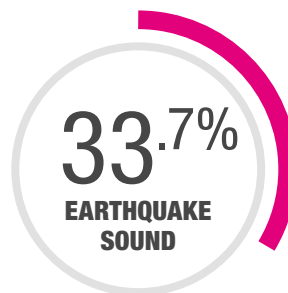
An often overlooked category, the Most Popular Intercom title has once again been awarded to Aiphone. This is the company's fourth win in four years. 2N jumped from eighth to third.

SEATING



Very little has changed in the Most Popular Seating category in the 2015 awards. LP Morgan retains a clear lead over the competition which Jaymar moves up from fourth to third.

TACTILE SOUND TRANSDUCER (SHAKER)

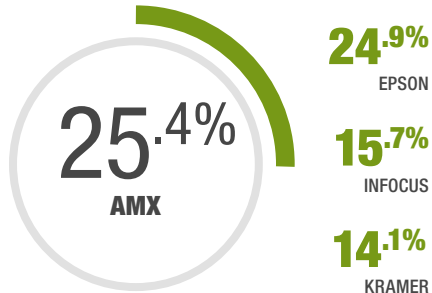


Last year's runner-up, Earthquake Sound, has pipped last year's winner, D-Box, at the post, claiming this year's title by just one vote.



2015 CONNECTED HOME MOST POPULAR AWARDS

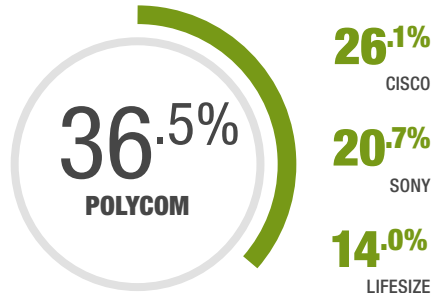
COLLABORATION TOOL



Followed by Cruiser Interactive (3.8%), Mersive (2.7%)

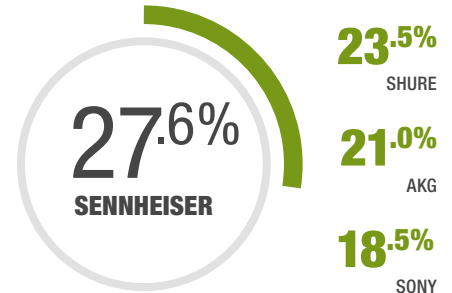
A new category in 2015, AMX's Enzo solution has just beaten Epson's popular MeetingMate to be named the Most Popular Collaboration Tool by readers of *Connected Home*.

VIDEO CONFERENCING EQUIPMENT



Another new category - the Most Popular Video Conferencing Equipment title has been awarded to Polycom, with Cisco coming in at second and Sony at third.

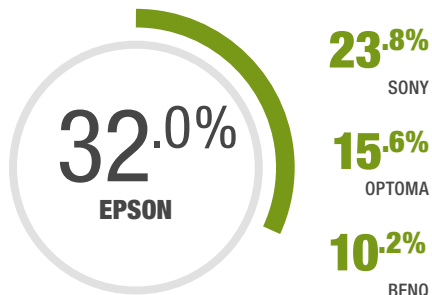
MICROPHONE



Followed by Jaycar (6.2%), Beesneez (3.3%), Samson (3.3%)

Sennheiser has claimed back-to-back victories, with Shure and AKG retaining second and third places respectively. Sony has moved up from seventh to claim fourth place in 2015.

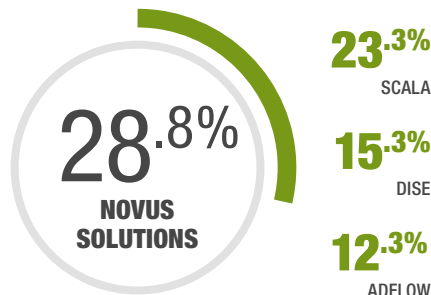
SHORT THROW PROJECTOR



Followed by ViewSonic (5.4%), Canon (5.1%), Sharp (4.4%), InFocus (3.1%), Casio (2.7%)

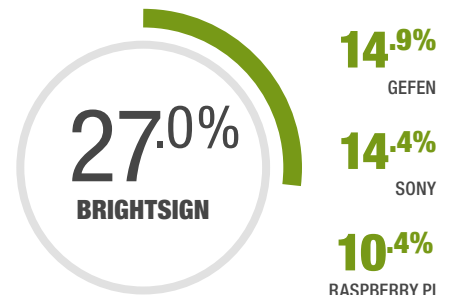
When it comes to projectors, Epson has proven to be the one to beat. As per the 'Home Theatre Projector' category, Sony has also been the big mover, jumping from fourth to second.

DIGITAL SIGNAGE CMS



Last year's third placed Novus Solutions has taken the 2015 title, increasing its vote share from 21.2% in 2014 to 28.8%. Scala moves to second place and DISE moves from seventh to third.

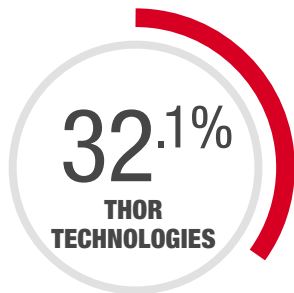
DIGITAL SIGNAGE PLAYER



Followed by Nexcomm (7.2%), Viewsonic (6.8%), Spinetix (4.5%), HP (3.6%)

The 2014 winner, Gefen, has fallen from first to second while Brightsign has jumped into first. Last year's runner up, Nexcomm, has fallen all the way down to eighth.

SURGE PROTECTION



17.2%

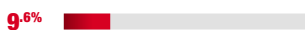
CLIPSAL BY SCHNEIDER

10.6%

FURMAN

9.6%

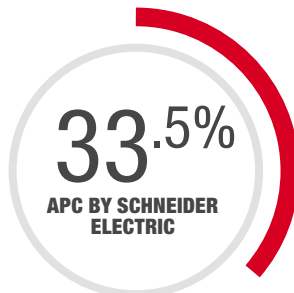
BELKIN



Followed by ABB (5.6%)

For the fourth year running, WA-based Thor Technologies has taken the title of Most Popular Surge Protection. Clipsal has moved into second and Belkin has moved up to fourth.

UPS



21.4%

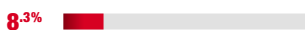
EATON

16.9%

FURMAN

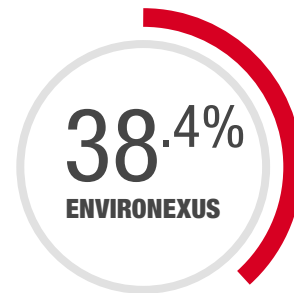
13.2%

POWERTECH



In 2015, a company that actually makes a UPS has finally won the title of Most Popular UPS. APC - the perennial runner up to Thor Technologies - has finally claimed the top spot.

ENERGY MONITORING



19.4%

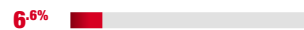
CLIPSAL BY SCHNEIDER

10.0%

CONTROL4

8.7%

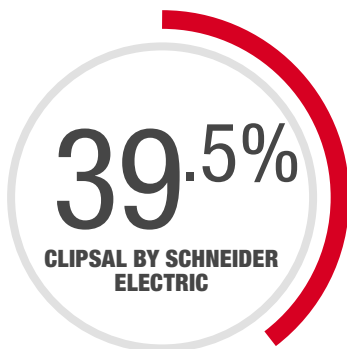
CRESTRON



Followed by AMX (4.2%), Savant (2.4%), Leviton Security & Automation (1.7%)

Environexus has gone back-to-back, claiming this category for the second year running. The big mover, though, is Control4, which jumped from sixth to third in 2015.

LIGHTING CONTROL



PHILIPS DYNALITE **29.1%**

ENVIRONEXUS **18.1%**

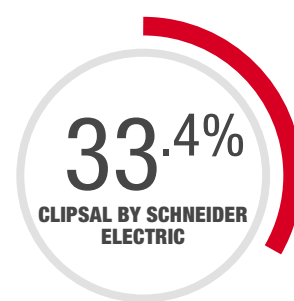
CONTROL4 **11.0%**



Followed by Lutron (6.2%), KNX (5.3%)

While the outcome of this category was never in doubt, Philips Dynalite has reclaimed second position after slipping to third in 2014. All other positions are unchanged from last year.

LED LIGHTING



33.2%

LUMEX

16.6%

PHILIPS

9.5%

PIERLITE



After coming fourth last year, Clipsal has taken out the 2015 title of Most Popular LED Lighting by one vote. Last year's winner, Philips, has moved to third.