

AUSTRALIA

2013

DECIDES

THE MOST POPULAR BRANDS ACROSS 50 CATEGORIES

OVER 475 MEMBERS OF THE AUSTRALIAN AND NEW ZEALAND HOME AUTOMATION INDUSTRIES HAVE COME TOGETHER TO SELECT THEIR PREFERRED BRANDS. **PAUL SKELTON** REPORTS.

You often hear parents of unpopular kids assure them that life is not a popularity contest.

Well, that's not entirely true.

For example, if you start a business without an aim to be popular, then you won't be around for long.

No. The simple truth is that popularity should be something that is celebrated and highlighted. Possibly even in the form of an award from the leading industry magazine.

THE AWARDS

There's a lot of conjecture out there from manufacturers that claim to be number one, and you can't always tell fact from fiction. That's why we here at *Connected Home* have once again asked you to identify the brands that you like to get a clear idea of which products are being installed in Australian and New Zealand homes, and to identify the industry leaders in each category.

In total, 477 installers from Australia and New Zealand responded to what has become an annual exercise in tracking the development and growth of the industry, and to recognise those companies that lead the way in a particular category.

These installers have taken the time to let manufacturers, distributors and industry as a whole know exactly what they think of their and their competitors' products. So pay attention.

STRONG PERFORMANCES

Just like last year, several manufacturers took out multiple categories.

Integra, RTI, Thor Technologies, Clipsal, Ness and Crestron all took out two categories each. Sonance, however, claimed three titles – Most Popular In Wall/In Ceiling Speakers, Most Popular 'Invisible' Loudspeakers and Most Popular Outdoor Loudspeakers.

Wins by Thor Technologies, Kordz and Screen Technics have also shown that there is a lot of faith remaining in Australian manufacturing and that we are very capable of producing quality products locally.

THE PALMER EFFECT

Last year, Bose was nowhere to be seen in these awards. Now, in a performance that is reminiscent of Clive Palmer in the 2013 Federal Election, it is everywhere.

The consumer-friendly company not only won one of the categories (Most Popular Freestanding Loudspeakers) but it also had a strong showing in several others.

However, as far as I know, Bose has no plans to sue Rupert Murdoch or the Australian Electoral Commission. Nor has it accused Wendi Deng Murdoch of being a Chinese spy.

THE BIG WINNER

With a total of 10 of the 50 awards going to brands represented by Amber Technology, it's clear that the company still has a lot of fans in the market.

On behalf of *Connected Home*, I would like to congratulate Amber Technology and all of the other category winners.

For those who didn't win, I wish you the best of luck for 2014. **CH**



CATEGORY WINNERS



AUDIO

AV RECEIVERS
INTEGRA
SOUNDBARS
SONOS
SUBWOOFERS
VELODYNE
TURNTABLES
REGA
PREAMPLIFIERS
INTEGRA

ACOUSTIC TREATMENTS
PRIMACOUSTICS
IN-WALL/IN-CEILING SPEAKERS
SONANCE
FREESTANDING LOUDSPEAKERS
BOSE
'INVISIBLE' LOUDSPEAKERS
SONANCE
OUTDOOR LOUDSPEAKERS
SONANCE
SPEAKER CABLING /
INTERCONNECTS
AUDIOQUEST



VIDEO

ANTENNAS
HILLS
TV MOUNTS
VOGEL'S
PROJECTORS
JVC
LIFTERS
ULTRALIFT
GAMING
SONY

BLU-RAY PLAYERS
OPPO
MEDIA SERVERS
APPLE TV
VIDEO PROCESSORS
CRESTRON
OUTDOOR DISPLAYS
SUNBRITE
PROJECTION SCREENS
SCREEN TECHNICS
FLAT PANEL DISPLAYS
SAMSUNG



CONTROL

REMOTE CONTROL
RTI
MOTORIZED BLINDS
SOMFY

LIGHTING CONTROL
CLIPSAL
MULTI-ROOM AV DISTRIBUTION
SONOS
WHOLE-HOUSE CONTROL SYSTEM
RTI
IR DISTRIBUTOR/EXTENDER
XANTECH



CONTENT

DAB+
SANGEAN
NAS
NETGEAR

MEDIA STREAMING
DEVICES
APPLE TV
CLOUD SERVERS
DROPBOX
ONLINE MUSIC
STREAMING
SPOTIFY



INFRASTRUCTURE

HDMI CABLING
KORDZ
TELEPHONY
CISCO

MATRIX SWITCHERS
CRESTRON
RACKS/CABINETS
MIDDLE ATLANTIC
COOLING SYSTEMS
COOL COMPONENTS



ELECTRICAL

LED LIGHTING
PHILIPS
HVAC
DAIKIN

SURGE PROTECTION
THOR TECHNOLOGIES
ELECTRICAL ACCESSORIES
CLIPSAL
ENERGY MONITORING
CLIPSAL
UPS
THOR TECHNOLOGIES



OTHER

INTERCOM
AIPHONE

SEATING
LP MORGAN
SECURITY SYSTEMS
NESS
IP SECURITY CAMERAS
NESS



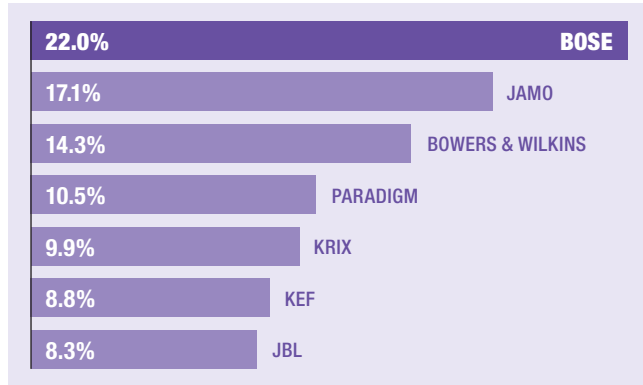
DISTRIBUTOR





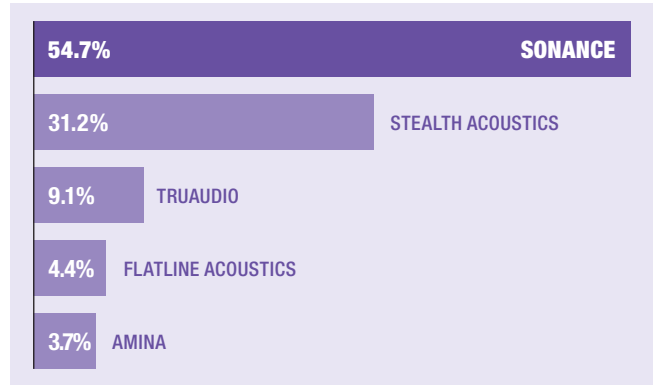
AUDIO

FREESTANDING LOUDSPEAKERS



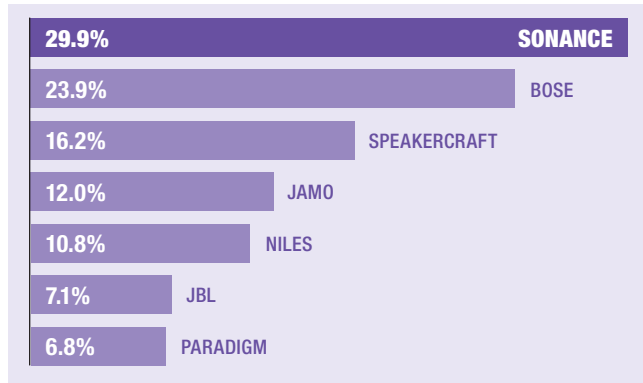
In a result that is likely to get people talking, Bose has been named as the 'Most Popular Freestanding Loudspeaker 2013' despite not actually making a freestanding loudspeaker.

'INVISIBLE' LOUDSPEAKERS



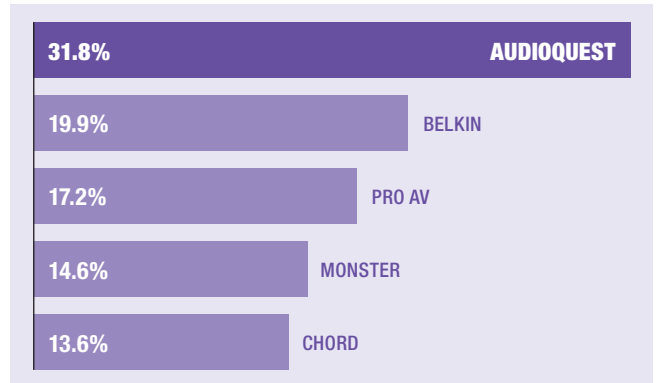
Sonance has claimed the title of '2013 Most Popular Invisible Loudspeaker', stealing the title from last year's winner, Stealth Acoustics, which has moved to second place.

OUTDOOR LOUDSPEAKERS



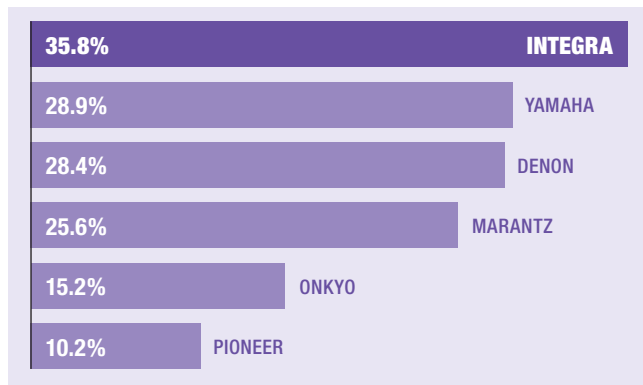
Once again it's a Sonance/Bose/SpeakerCraft trifecta, but this time it's for outdoor speakers. Sonance also won this award last year, showing that its Landscape Series is a true winner.

SPEAKER CABLING / INTERCONNECTS



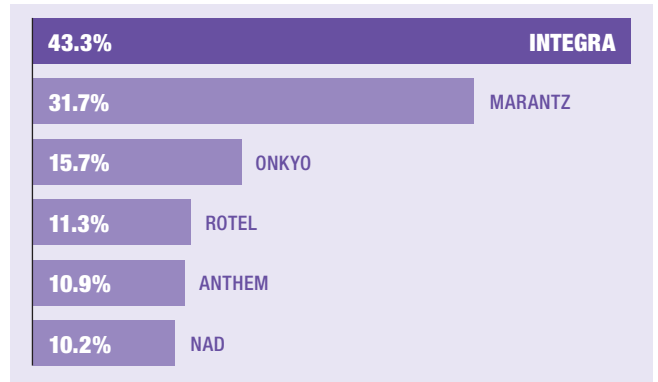
As any integrator will tell you, wiring may not be sexy but it is important. And almost one third of voters believe Audioquest offers you the best chance of getting it right.

AV RECEIVERS



For the second year running, Integra has been selected as the most popular AV receiver in Australia. And, aside from Marantz dropping from second to fourth, very little else has changed.

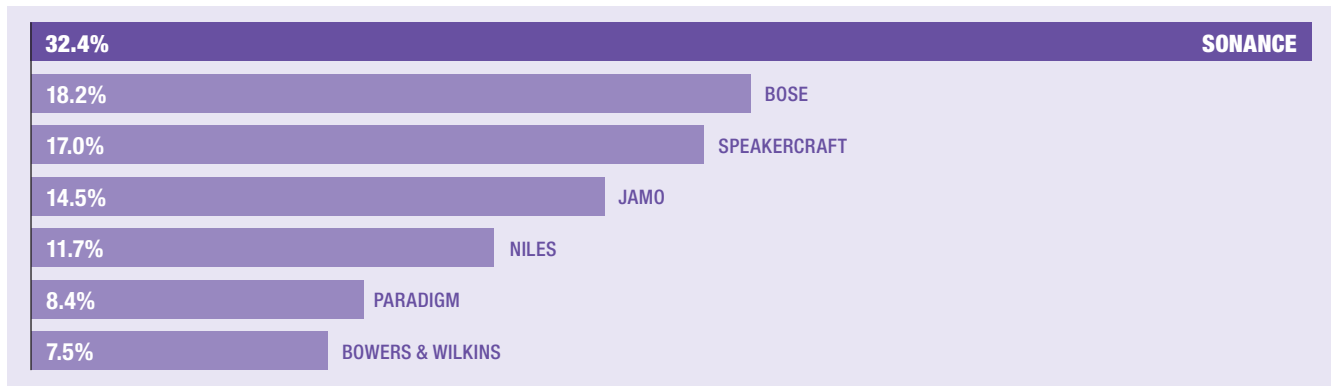
PREAMPLIFIERS



Proving that it offers a complete audio processing system, Integra has also won the title of 'Most Popular Preamplifier'. The only new addition to the top six here is NAD, which has secured sixth place.

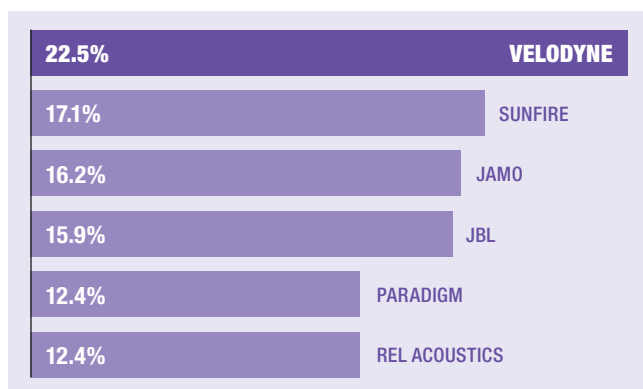


IN-WALL/IN-CEILING SPEAKERS



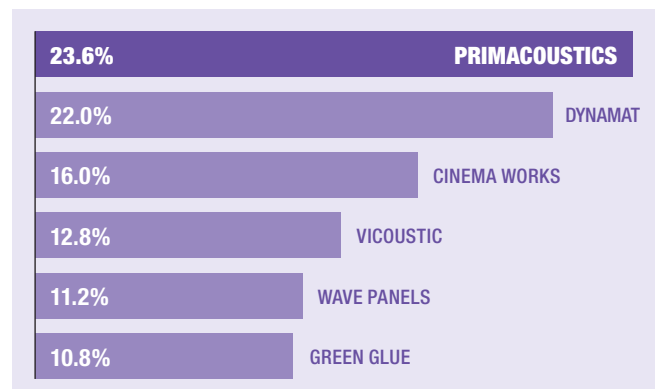
In what is possibly the most 'custom-friendly' category of the audio section, Sonance was the bigger winner (this year as well as last year). Congratulations also to Bose for making a strong showing in this year's awards.

SUBWOOFERS



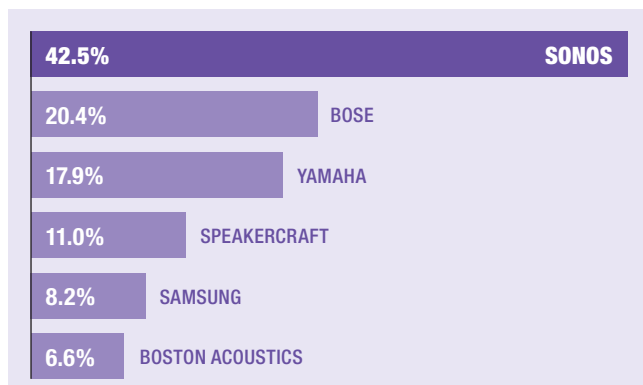
Strangely, subwoofers didn't get a run in last year's competition. But it has proved itself as a hotly contested category. With 22.5% of the vote Velodyne is the winner, but it was definitely a nail-biter.

ACOUSTIC TREATMENTS



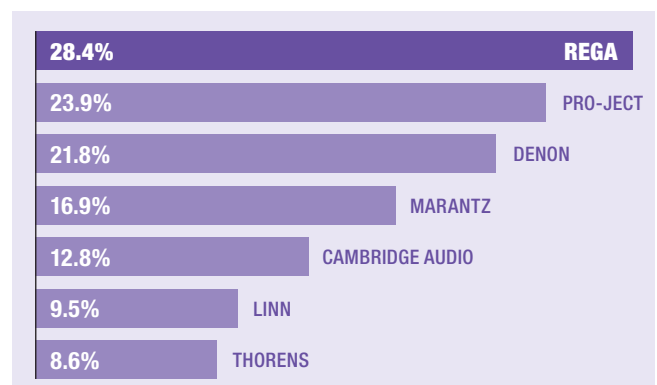
Who could forget the inclusion of 'egg cartons' as a popular acoustic treatment in 2012? No so this year as Primacoustics jumps from fifth to first to take the title.

SOUNDBARS



Despite being a very new product to the market, the aggressive marketing campaign to a consumer audience has paid off for the Sonos Playbar, which dominated this category.

TURNTABLES



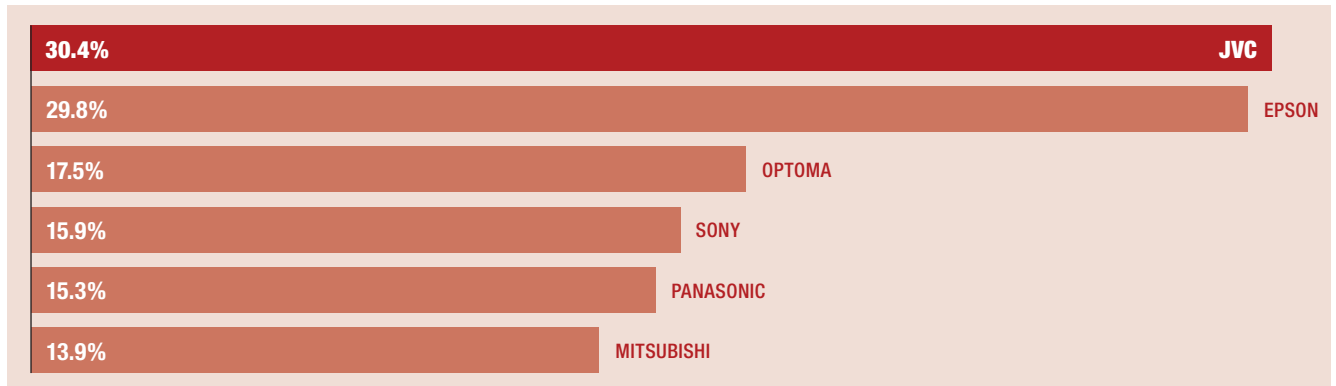
This is a new category for us. For that reason we didn't know what to expect. Turntables, which were the pinnacle of hi-fi audio in the 1970s, have made a comeback. Congrats, hipsters. And Rega.





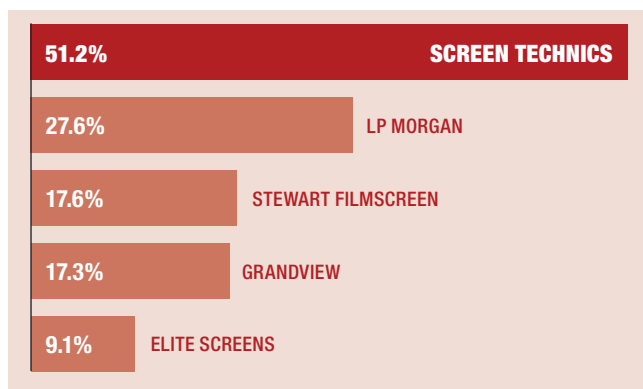
VIDEO

PROJECTORS



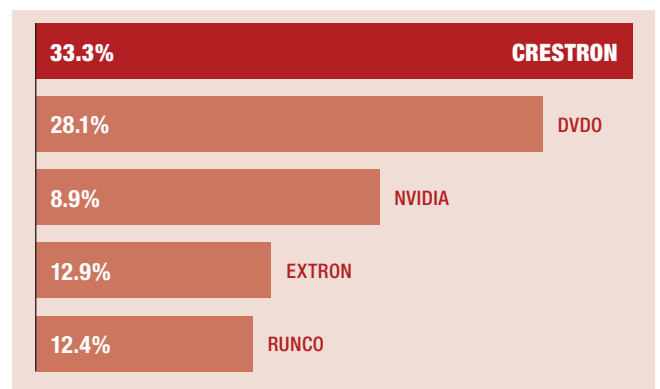
Closely mirroring the 2012 awards, the Most Popular Projector category was again the closest fought battle this year with JVC beating out Epson for the top placing by just a handful of votes. It really is a battle of the Titans.

PROJECTION SCREENS



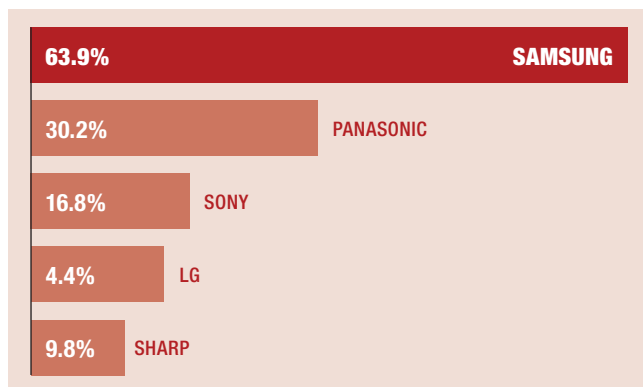
It's always good to see a local manufacturer win. And when it is such a commanding victory then it really shows that quality Australian manufacturing is far from dead.

VIDEO PROCESSORS



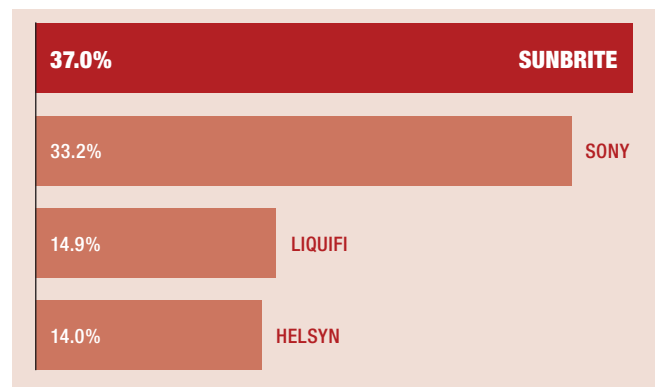
This is the second year running that Crestron has claimed the title of 'Most Popular Video Processor', but the big story is Runco moving from a 1.7% result in 2012 to 12.4% in 2013.

FLAT PANEL DISPLAYS



Aside from slight changes in percentages, the top five placings in the Most Popular Flat Panel Display category are identical to the 2012 awards. Congratulations must go to Samsung for this win.

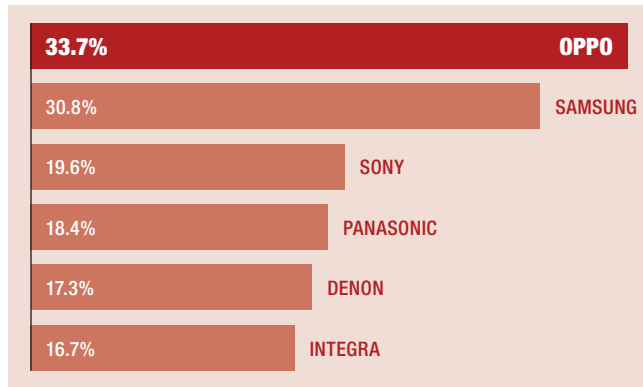
OUTDOOR DISPLAYS



Sunbrite has won (and retained) this category. Sony came in second with 33.2% of the vote... even though they don't make an outdoor display.

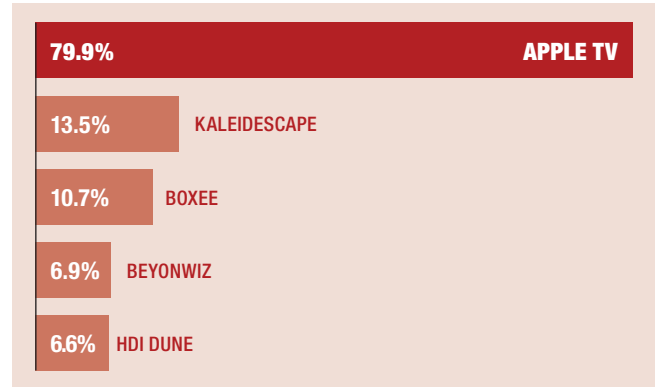


BLU-RAY PLAYERS



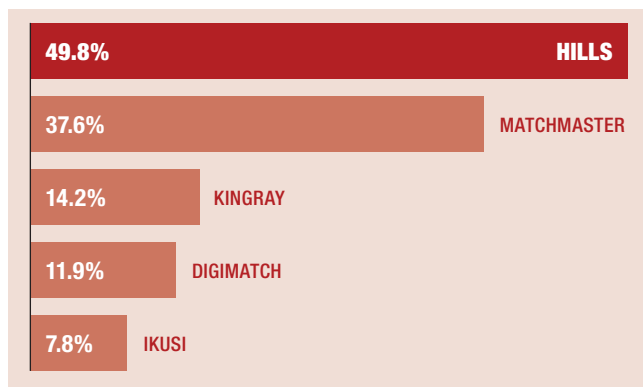
With OPPO only making one type of product - Blu-ray players - it would be hard-pressed not to win this category. That said, Samsung also made a strong showing with its players in 2013.

MEDIA SERVERS



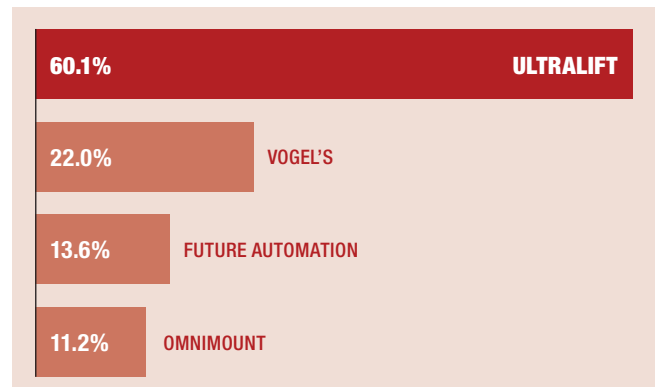
Is anyone really surprised that AppleTV won this award? Interestingly, though, Kaleidescape, which sits at the opposite end of the price spectrum, came in a healthy second place.

ANTENNAS



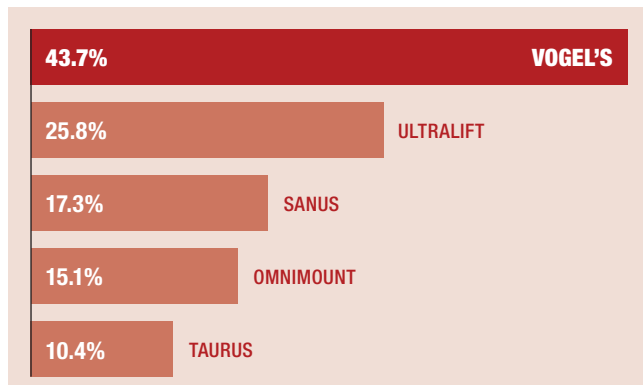
In a not-so-surprising result, Hills and Matchmaster have dominated the antenna category for 2013, with Hills being recommended by almost half of *Connected Home* readers.

LIFTERS



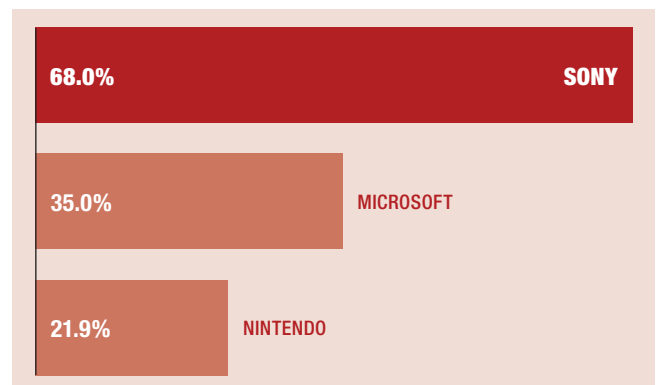
Perhaps more surprising than Ultralift's retention of this title from 2012 is Future Automation's third placing. The company has increased its standing from 2.2% in 2012 to 13.6% in 2013.

TV MOUNTS



Once again Vogel's has been named *Connected Home's* Most Popular TV Mounts. But it has faced some stiff competition from Ultralift (2.1% in 2012) and new entrant Taurus.

GAMING



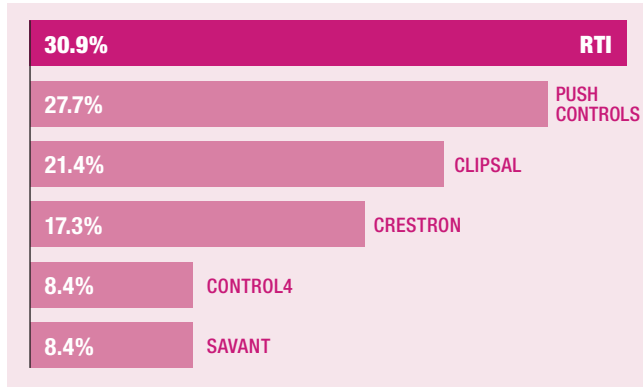
With the dominant PlayStation 3 (PS3) on the market and a lot of hype surrounding the forthcoming release of the PS4, is it really any wonder why Sony has won this category two years in a row?





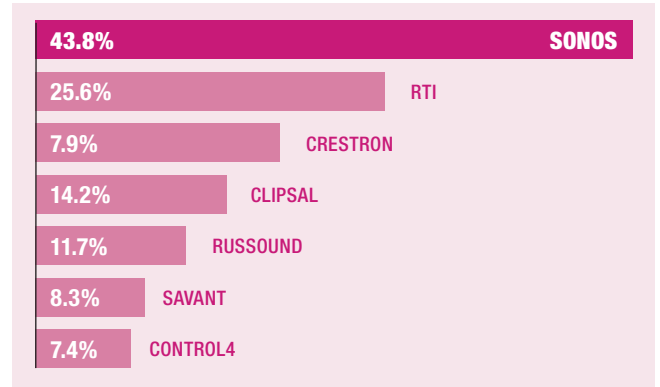
CONTROL

WHOLE-HOUSE CONTROL SYSTEM



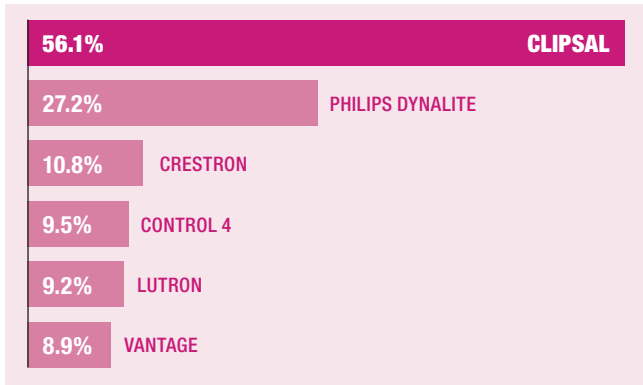
There has been a lot of change in this category since last year. 2012 winner, Clipsal, has slipped to third position. RTI has moved up to first. And Push Controls has gone from 2.7% to 27.7%.

MULTI-ROOM AV DISTRIBUTION



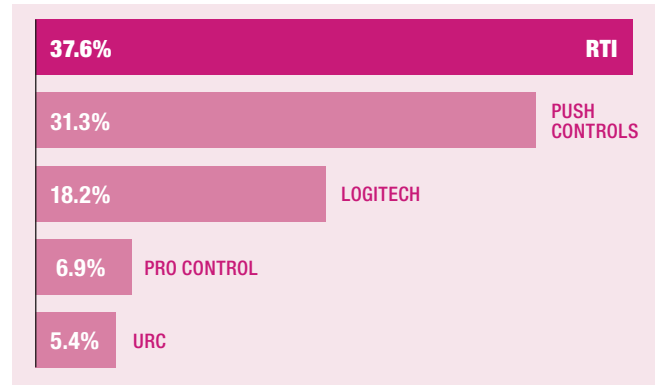
For the second year running, Sonos has been named the 'Most Popular Multi-room AV Distribution System'. Congratulations also go to Russound for increasing from 3.9% to 11.7%.

LIGHTING CONTROL



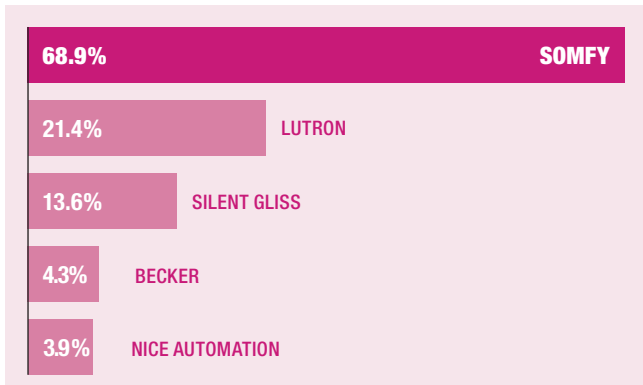
Perhaps unsurprisingly, Clipsal by Schneider Electric has once again taken out the 'Most Popular Lighting Control System' category. Was this ever in doubt?

REMOTE CONTROL



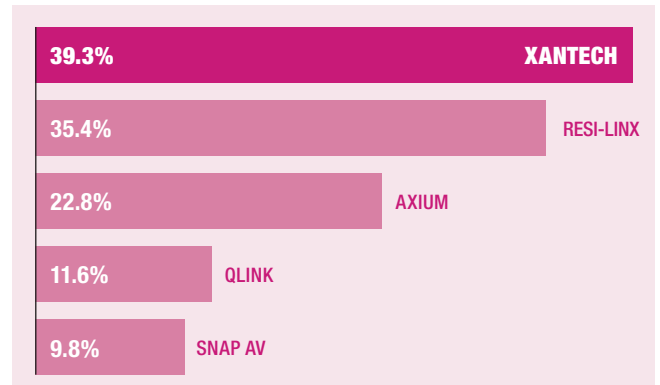
It has been a stellar year for RTI. New remotes, controllers, expansion modules and programming software prove the remote control industry is far from over.

MOTORISED BLINDS



When it comes to motorised blinds in Australia, is there any name that is more synonymous than Somfy? With 68.9% of the vote, readers of *Connected Home* clearly don't think so.

IR DISTRIBUTOR/EXTENDER

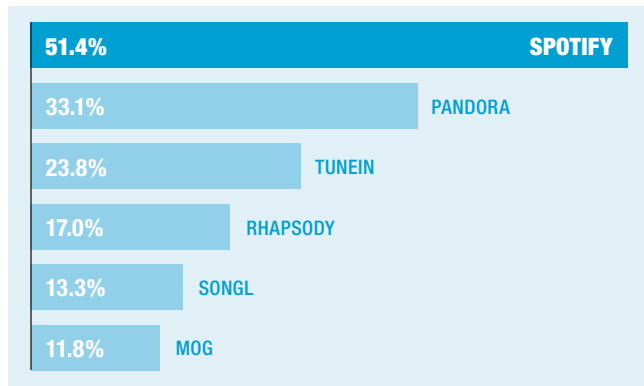


In 2013, Xantech has retained the premier position in the IR Distributor/Extender category, but local player resi-linx has significantly closed the gap. Axium is the big mover here, though.



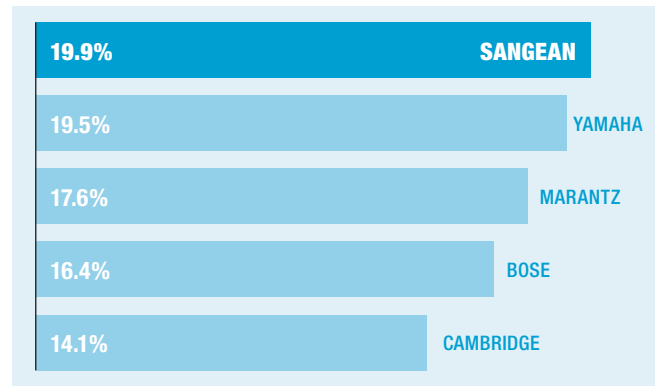


ONLINE MUSIC STREAMING



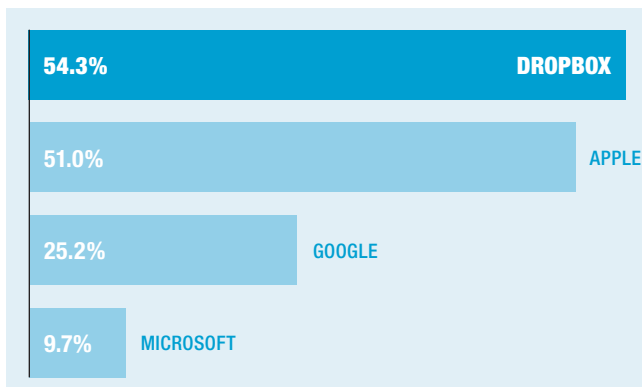
Online music streaming services are a relatively new phenomenon in Australia (legally, anyway) and after its long-awaited release earlier this year, Spotify has won your hearts... and ears.

DAB+



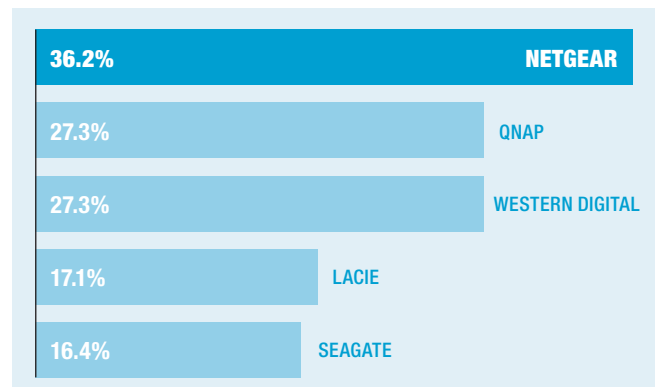
There are a lot of digital radios on the market, ranging from the very good to the very bad. In a very tight field it is Sangean that reigns supreme.

CLOUD SERVERS



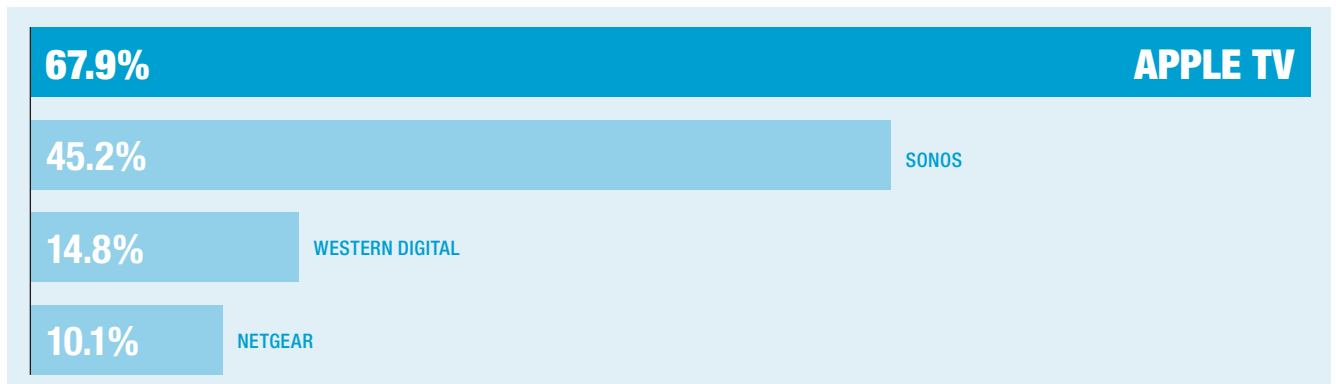
Who doesn't love a good upset? After a last minute surge in voting, Dropbox has knocked out Apple as the 'Most Popular Cloud Server'. Well played, Dropbox. Well played.

NAS



Network attached storage (NAS) comes in many different forms and many different sizes. Once again, Netgear has taken the title with QNAP and WD ranking second and third respectively.

MEDIA STREAMING DEVICES



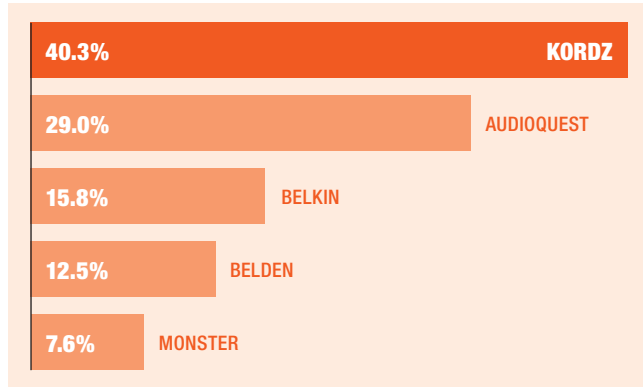
With two-thirds of voters selecting AppleTV as their media streaming device of choice, there's no denying the impact Apple is having on living rooms around the country. Strangely, last year it only received 5.6% of the vote.





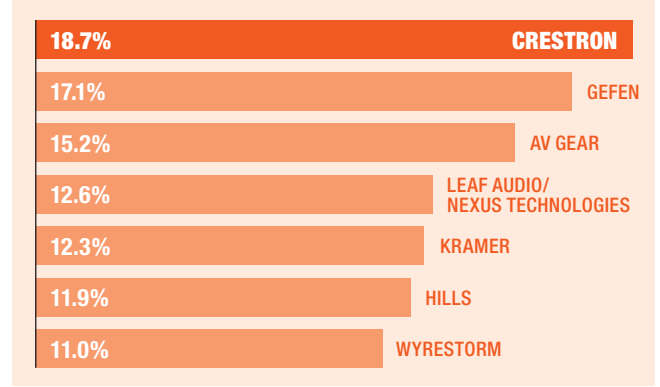
INFRASTRUCTURE

HDMI CABLING



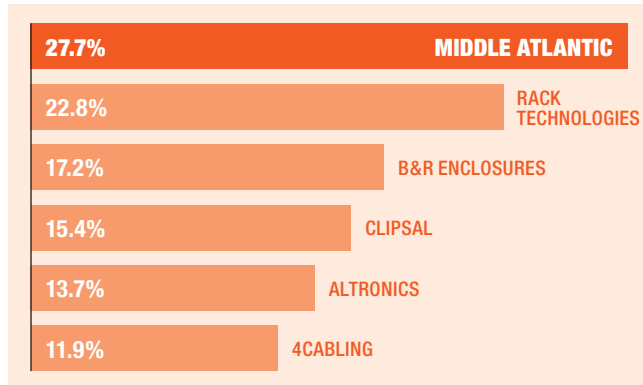
For the second year running, local manufacturer Kordz has taken the title of 'Most Popular HDMI Cabling'. Audioquest also retains its number two placing. Belkin has moved from sixth to third.

MATRIX SWITCHERS



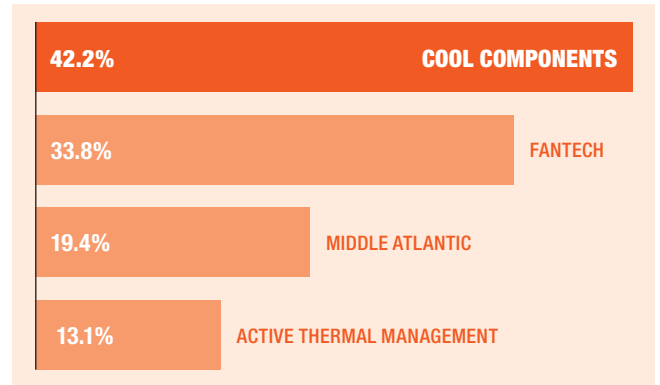
Last year's runner-up, Crestron, has taken the 2013 title, with new entry AV Gear moving into third place. Last year's winner, Leaf Audio/Nexus Technologies, has slipped back to fourth.

RACKS/CABINETS



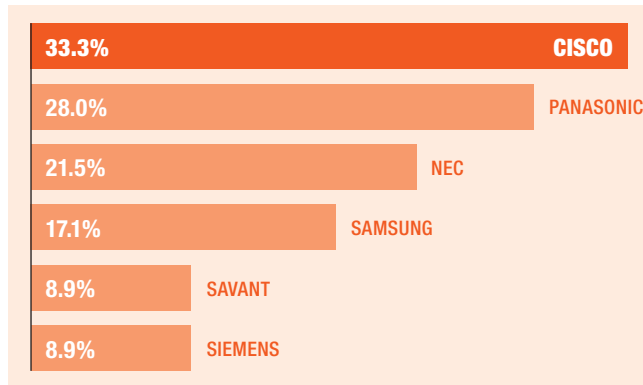
Middle Atlantic has retained first place in this category. But Rack Technologies and B&R Enclosures have both increased from 9.8% in 2012 to 22.8% and 17.2% in 2013, respectively.

COOLING SYSTEMS



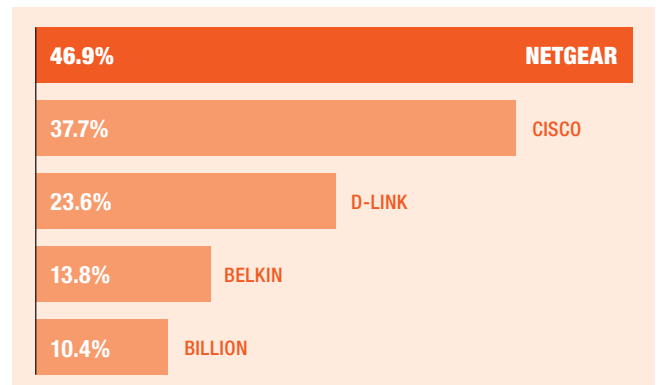
In the 2012 awards, there was a slightly contentious draw in this category between Cool Components and Fantech. This year we don't need to worry about that as Cool Components dominates.

TELEPHONY



The first four placeholders in the telephony category are all repeats from last year, with Cisco ever-so-slightly increasing its lead over Panasonic by an additional 1.9%.

ROUTERS

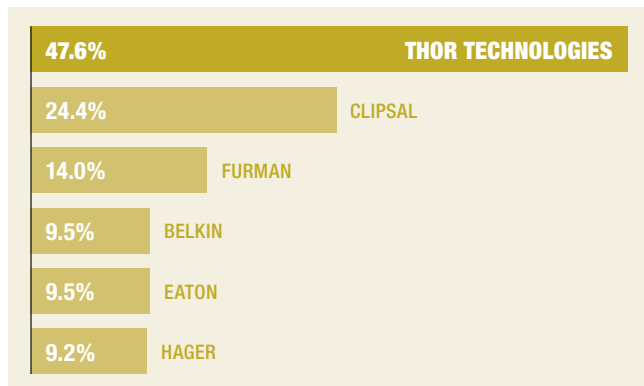


Apart from Belkin overtaking Billion for the fourth and fifth position, these five companies all appeared in the 2012 awards. Netgear, though, has increased its lead over the rest of the field.



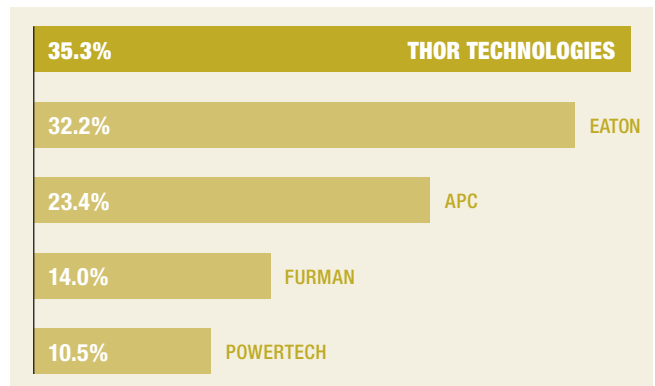


SURGE PROTECTION



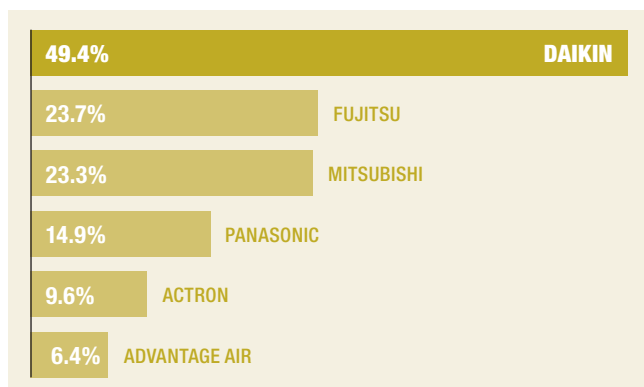
Small local operator Thor Technologies has dominated its competition with almost half of the voters ranking it as their preferred supplier of surge protection devices.

UPS



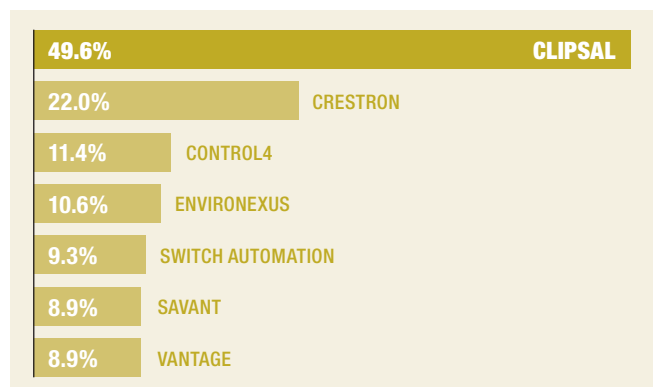
From 3.4% in 2012 to 35.3% in 2013, UPS devices by Thor Technologies have seen an unprecedented jump in popularity among readers of *Connected Home*.

HVAC



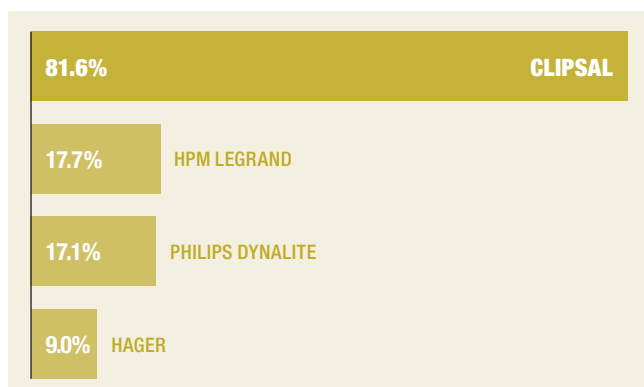
Over the past 12 months, Daikin has gone from strength to strength and has increased its lead from 12.9% in 2012 to 25.7% this year. Everyone else has remained the same.

ENERGY MONITORING



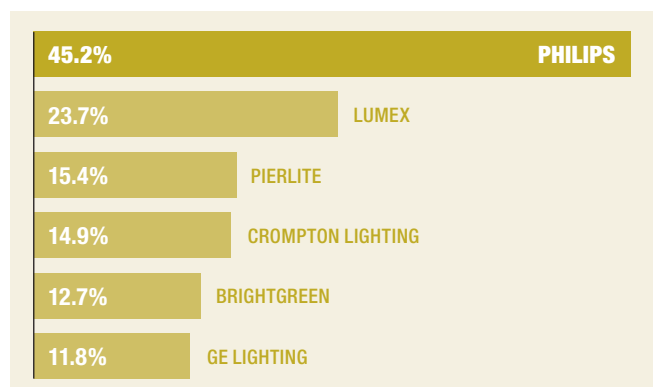
Energy monitoring gets a lot of press, and is often one of the features highlighted by manufacturers. For the second year running, Clipsal by Schneider Electric has been deemed the best.

ELECTRICAL ACCESSORIES



With the largest range of electrical accessories on the Australian market, and a lengthy history of product development and support, Clipsal was never going to be touched in this category.

LED LIGHTING



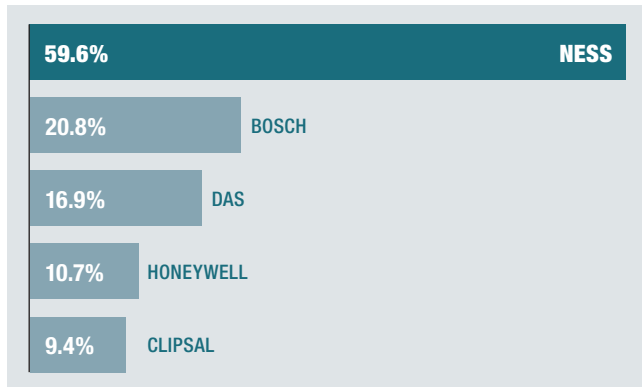
The almost-ubiquitous LED lighting from Philips has clearly dominated this category, with former runner up GE Lighting moving down to sixth. Lumex is the big surprise here.





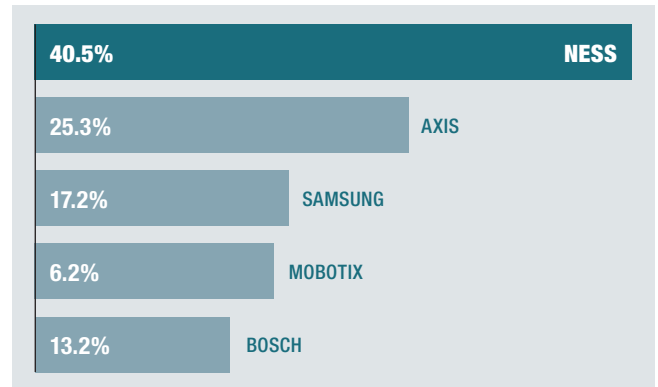
OTHER

SECURITY SYSTEMS



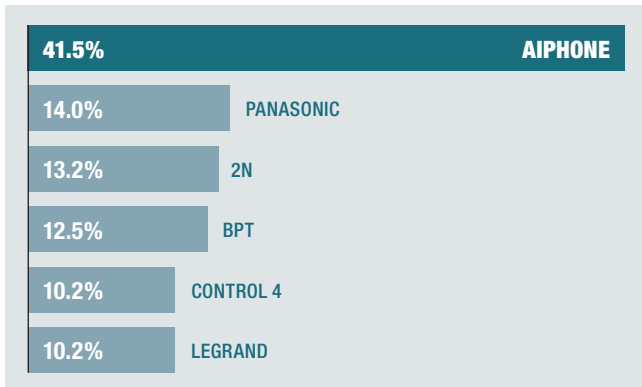
Ness, of course, is the '2013 Most Popular Security System', while Bosch has gone from 5% in 2012 to 20.8% in 2013 and DAS has risen from 2.5% last year to 16.9% now.

IP SECURITY CAMERAS



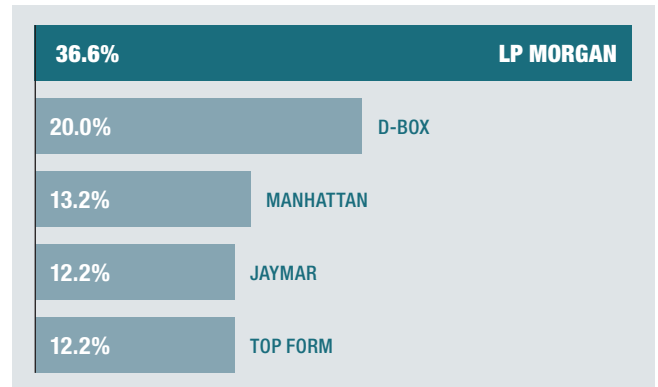
From fifth to first, Ness has leapt its competition to be the 2013 champion of 'Most Popular IP Security Cameras'. Axis has slid to second while Honeywell has slid off the list completely.

INTERCOM



While Aiphone retains its title, the lower rankings have seen dramatic changes. Last year, Legrand was second and Switch Automation was fourth. In 2013, Switch didn't make the list.

SEATING



LP Morgan has gone back-to-back, having the 'Most Popular Seating' for two years in a row. D-Box has gone from 4.8% in 2012 to 20% in 2013.



DISTRIBUTOR



"The report of my death was an exaggeration..." Despite being the target of some negative attention, Amber Technology has been named the '2013 Most Popular Distributor'. A special mention must go to Avation and Hills SVL for nipping at their heels.

