

# Taming the Tangle of Wires in Your Home

The mazes of unsightly wires that sprout from home computers, home entertainment systems and home appliances seem to grow worse with each new wave of technology. It's enough to make you want to pull the plug, so to speak. But don't let it stop you from using the best wiring systems available for communications and home electronics.

True, wireless systems are improving all the time, and they probably have a place at home for those who want the freedom to carry their electronic work — or play — from the desktop to the couch to the bed. But no matter how much they improve, wireless systems will never equal wired systems for speed, security, accuracy and reliability.

## Containing Computer Clutter

Manufacturers now offer a variety of wire organizers that can help tame the clutter. Here are just a few examples. Many more are available for sale online or at local computer and electronics stores.

One effective solution is a type of flexible plastic tubing designed to gather multiple wires neatly inside. It resembles a thin vacuum cleaner hose, but with a slit along its length that allows you to spread it open and insert wires without disconnecting any equipment. One caveat: because of possible interference, you may find it desirable to use two tubes — one for power cords and one for sensitive communications wires, particularly those carrying audio or video signals.

Another way to keep wires “straight” is to mark them with special tags or labels. These identity tags make it easy to remember which wires serve what function and what they connect to — saving homeowners time and aggravation when they need to remove or reconnect a piece of equipment.

## Protecting Kids and Pets

Besides the convenience factor, wire organizers also serve an important safety function in households with pets or small children. Such safeguards can prevent choking and electrical hazards caused by exposed, chewed or frayed wiring. They also keep expensive appliances safe from damage that can result from “cord clutter.”

Telephone and extension cords under-

foot are another problem posed by modern technology. A gadget called a “cord keeper” lets you wind the cord around a self-retracting spool. Besides eliminating clutter caused by too-long cords, these devices keep wires off the floor so they don't get tangled up in the vacuum cleaner.

Finally, there's good news for anyone who has purchased a flat-panel television and wants to mount it on a wall. A new type of flattened, super-thin copper wiring designed to disappear under paint, wallpaper or carpet is available for a wide range of applications, from low-voltage audio/video distribution to 120-volt household power.

To learn more about communications wiring in the home, visit the Copper Development Association's Web site at [www.copper.org/telecom](http://www.copper.org/telecom). **HP**