

CABLE GUIDE



THE LINES BETWEEN DATA, AUDIO AND VIDEO CABLES ARE NOW COMPLETELY BLURRED, BUT THAT DOESN'T MEAN THE WORLD OF WIRING IS SIMPLER. THERE ARE MORE CABLES THAN EVER—HERE'S HOW TO USE THEM.

**CAT 5e**

This cable connects every device to your home network, allowing you to distribute movies, music and photos from PCs to HDTVs.

**USB**

The standard wire for connecting PC peripherals is also used for game-console controllers.

**iPOD CONNECTOR**

Many home theater receivers integrate iPod docks or USB inputs that interface directly with iPods.

**DVI**

Some PCs now have built-in AV connectors, but DVI, a video-only screen output, is still the most common way to get HD images out of a computer.

**SPDIF**

This optical cable transmits a purely digital audio signal from components and computers to receivers.

**MINIJACK**

Most commonly used for headphones, this analog stereo audio connection is also the default audio output for portable devices.

**COAXIAL AUDIO**

Like optical SPDIF audio cables, coaxial audio cables carry pure digital audio signals from components to AV receivers.

**HDMI**

The current king of AV cables, HDMI carries an uncompressed 1080p video signal and up to eight channels of digital audio.

**COMPONENT**

This three-plug analog technology can carry HD video up to 1080p, but cannot handle audio.

**S-VIDEO**

Back in the days of DVDs, S-video was the highest quality video connector you could get, but it is limited to an analog signal of 480i.

**COMPOSITE**

This video cable can only carry a standard-def image, but it is common on older equipment.

**RCA AUDIO**

Two-plug analog RCA jacks are still the most common way to connect audio components.

**COAXIAL**

Not to be confused with coaxial audio, this is the "cable" behind the cable industry. It carries both multichannel video and Internet into your home.

**SPEAKER WIRE**

Great big spools of this traditional wire need to be run throughout a room to carry sound from an AV receiver to surround-sound speakers.

