

The Top ECI Stories for 2017

Written by Marco Attard
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As 2017 comes to a close it is as good a time as any to take a look back at the times in custom install that have been, from smart speakers going mainstream to any number of company acquisitions and mergers.

- **Voice Control Hit the Mainstream:** [Speakers with built-in voice controlled assistants were all the rage at IFA 2017](#), with just about every company worth their salt showing off such a product at the show. Even Apple got in the game, as seen at WWDC 2017's reveal of the [HomePod](#), the Siri-powered take on the Amazon Echo.

- **Samsung's Harman Buys Arcam:** Famous British hifi maker Arcam found a buyer in July 2017 in [Samsung-owned Harman International Industries](#), owner of audio brands such as AKG, JBL, Lexicon and Mark Levinson. Samsung bought Harman late in 2016 for \$8 billion, the biggest deal in the Korean giant's history.

- **Smart Home Grows Bigger, Faster:** Smart home continued becoming part of mainstream in 2017 as according to analysts it is now one of the fastest growing CE categories of the year. Futuresource Consulting says [2017 global revenues total \\$6 billion](#), proof such devices help customers with daily tasks, security and energy savings.

- **Panasonic Still Believes in 3DTV:** Is 3DTV dead? The most obvious answer is yes, but some companies still release TVs with such capabilities. One example is Panasonic, who in [March 2017 released the EX780](#), a flagship 4K LED TV compatible with all 3D Blu-ray players. It is also the only 2017 TV from the company with 3D support, and possibly the last.

- **Samsung and Amazon Join HDR Forces:** Samsung and Amazon added another HDR standard in the video mixed with [HDR10](#)+, an option the two giants insist is better than the Dolby Vision competition through a free and open

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nature. It is (obviously) an update on the HDR10 standard, if with added Dynamic Tone Mapping allowing TVs to adjust brightness on a frame-by-frame basis.

- **Control4 Buys Triad Speakers:** Control4 buys more audio capabilities in March 2017 with [Triad Speakers](#), maker of advanced audio technology with customisable speaker solutions. The price? Approximately €9.07 million. The acquisition makes a strategic addition to the Control4 portfolio, since includes the programmable Control4 EA-series controllers with native high-resolution streaming music services, multi-room audio matrix switches and amplifiers, and ultra-HD 4K video matrix switches with audio down-mixing capabilities.

- **Sony Touches With Xperia Touch:** Mobile World Congress 2017 had Sony unveil a something of a surprise device. The [Xperia Touch](#) is an Android-powered projector able to turn any surface into a touchscreen while acting as a digital hub of sorts. It also carries a 13MP camera and speakers, allowing it to handle Skype video chats, while SXRD projection technology detects gestures and taps.