

Why Would an Audio Video Guy Get involved in the Energy Industry

That's a question I get constantly. First, let me give you some history

[Transcend Home Theater](#) started life as *The Home Automation Group*. We never intended to limit ourselves to strictly audio and video. After all, I have a 30+ year Information Technology career behind me. So with a background in high technology and certifications in audio and video calibration it seemed natural to get into the control and monitoring side of owning a home.

Now, Transcend is the DC areas leading A/V/Automation company with a focus on integration of home systems such as distributed audio, video, security, and **energy**.

The whole world realizes that energy isn't free and that the cost keeps going up as the planet warms up and the oil reserves shrink. We have to find new ways of generating energy and better ways of conserving it. This is true from 2 perspectives. First, the conservationist is concerned about the future of the planet and wants to make sure our children and our children's children don't have to walk around wearing gas masks and cook over open fires.

But, while politicians debate the future of the world, consumers have to pay to keep warm or cool. And the price keeps rising.

So I joined a group, [The Energy House](#), a consortium of companies that work together to educate the public and bring together energy saving resources for those who want them. (Note: They also provide free energy reviews for home owners. This is not a full energy audit but it is a useful examination of your home that can point out numerous ways to save money.)

The Energy House helps build and/or remodel homes in very energy-efficient ways (typically **60% savings** over a conventional house) and then holds an open house to showcase the features and allow consumers to meet and question experts in all energy related fields including heating and cooling (geothermal, mini-splits, passive solar...), insulation materials and techniques (fiberglass, foam...), construction (windows, doors, flooring...), lighting (CFC, LCD...) and **energy monitoring**. That's where I come in. I build automation systems, install theaters, distribute audio and video throughout a home, and I keep an eye on what's going on.

So we integrate monitoring strategies into our automation systems. We monitor electrical usage in the home and determine what is using it. How much does it cost you to heat your home? How much to run your refrigerator or your microwave? Your washing machine?

Monitoring can be very detailed, down to the lamp in your bedroom, but that level of monitoring is very expensive. We can do a very good job for only a few hundred dollars. A very good job.

Why do I want to know all this about my home? Well first, wouldn't you want I know if your investment in energy efficiency worked? If we are going to remodel your home we will do before and after energy utilization. We will also calculate your estimated savings. We want to know that we were right.

Second, energy bills are different from every other bill you have. When you fill your gas tank, how long is it before you know how much it will cost? A few minutes at most. When will you know how much your electricity is costing you? You'll know sometime next month. Is that soon enough? It may be if everything goes well, but what if your refrigerator is going south and its electrical usage tripled? You won't know until you get that bill. And even after you get the bill, **you still won't know what device is causing the problem.** Our monitors can tell you almost immediately after the device goes bad. A few hundred dollars spent on monitoring can save you thousands in the long run.

All this is just a long-winded way of telling you why I got into this. **Because it's important!** In today's world we all need to know what it costs us to get from one day to the next. Energy is a rapidly growing part of the cost of living. We have to keep track of it.