

## CONTROL4

# Home Controller HC-300

### How do you rate the HC-300?

On a scale of one to 10, I'd rate it a nine. The HC-300 is clearly an outstanding value when it comes to bang for the buck. The price is low enough that it can be sold strictly as a universal remote control solution (Control4's V2 remote is included in the package); on the other hand, it is so feature-rich and its processor so powerful that it can automate an entire home.

### For what types of installations is it best suited?

As mentioned above, the HC-300 cuts a wide swath across a number of different applications. The sweet spot that we have found for it, however, is "theater-control plus." Because the unit has two RS-232 serial ports, we can set up two-way hardwired control of a receiver,



typically Denon, and a Sony DVD-CX777ES DVD changer (Control4 gives on-screen cover art and descriptions of the DVDs in the changer). IR control is then wired up for additional equipment such as the display, cable box, etc. That covers the theater or viewing room. The plus then comes into play as

the HC-300 runs select applications in the rest of the house. Through Zigbee, lights and thermostats are easily added to a project. Even with theater components, secondary audio, lights, and thermostats all attached to it, the HC-300 has enough memory and CPU horsepower to run everything easily with crisp, immediate response and feedback.

### Describe the feature set.

The control unit has an enviable number of inputs and outputs. It starts with video outputs for composite, S-video and component (720P, which is an upgrade from its predecessor). These are coupled with two sets of stereo audio outputs and one input. There are two video sensing loops, two RS-232 ports, six IR outputs and relay and contact closures. Last but not least is a 10/100 ethernet jack and two USB ports, which can be used to connect an MP3/iPod or an optional WiFi adapter. At \$699 list, this is an incomparable set of hardware and capabilities for the price.

### What features would you like to see changed or added?

The only thing that makes sense for Control4 to add (and still stay within this price point) is HDMI. Component is falling by the wayside very quickly and HDMI would also provide a digital transport for the audio, which it currently lacks.

## PRODUCT SPECS

- ▶ Fits easily into any location
  - ▶ Replaces multiple remotes
  - ▶ Control music, lighting, temperature, blinds, and more
  - ▶ Multiple IR, serial outputs, and intelligent video sensing
  - ▶ ZigBee mesh networking, ethernet, or Wi-Fi (adaptor optional)
  - ▶ Works with all Control4 components and third party devices
  - ▶ Wizard-based set up guide
  - ▶ Clearly marked connectors on the back of the device
  - ▶ Cables included
  - ▶ Uses Control4 touchscreens, keypads, or included system remote control
  - ▶ HD onscreen navigation provides large, bright, clear 16x9 graphics
  - ▶ Very affordable
- ▶ 211

## THE REVIEWER...

### ABOUT THE REVIEWER...

Jim Anderson is president of Allied Home Technologies (615.385.3999, www.alliedhometech.com) based in Nashville, Tennessee. He founded a commercial AV company nearly 18 years ago and subsequently sold it to a phone company after five years of success. He entered the residential systems industry three years ago, driven by the knowledge that he could build a company and reputation based on quality work. Although Allied Home Technologies focuses on the upper end of the market

(homes over 5,000 square feet and \$1MM), Anderson credits his pragmatic clients for his firm's ability to deliver components and overall installations that are high quality without being high dollar.

### IN HIS OWN WORDS...

"Everyday is a new challenge—and I say that without a trace of irony or sarcasm. What makes it fun is that we've never had a challenge that



we couldn't meet and overcome one way or another. [But] I'd be remiss if I didn't point out that our single greatest challenge on a daily basis is taking all this power that we're handing our customers and putting it in a form that is easy to figure out and use. That is our daily challenge and seeing that smile on their face when it all comes together. That is what I truly find exciting about being a dealer."