White Paper

Global Caché

Choices in Controlling IR Devices from an iPhone/iPod/iPad

Introduction

As the market for the integrated control and automation of household and business devices expands, what was originally a single niche market is separating off into multiple, more specialized avenues one can pursue while creating a control solution. With expanded product choices comes product and purpose confusion. It can be easy to misunderstand the value of a product based only on specifications and pricing. The most important information to have when choosing the right product for an installation is knowing the necessary functions of the installed hardware and the capabilities of each of the available candidates.

How is the iTach different than an iPhone/iPod/iPad IR dongle?

Some have asked why they should buy an iTach when they can purchase an IR dongle at a lower price? The real question should focus on the intended purpose of the installed control device and its value in the installed control solution. The dongle, such as the L5 Remote, attaches directly to the Apple handheld device, turning it into a universal remote control. There are some benefits to this approach, including a low price point. On that same note, there are hindrances to this peripheral control method. Only one Apple product can communicate with the dongle at a time, meaning that a multiple user environment would require the purchase of multiple dongles. In addition, the dongle must be in the same room with direct line of sight to control the equipment. Since the dongle utilizes the iPod/iPhone/iPad headphone jack, any accessory requiring the headphone jack must be removed before the dongle can be used and vice versa.

Why choose the iTach?

Why should an installer/integrator/user choose to use a Global Caché iTach in their control solution? Once on the network, iTach units have a network address, allowing any device on the network to use the iTach as a resource. From any location in the house or building, up to eight wirelessly connected Apple products (such as iPad, iPod touch, and iPhone) or PCs on the

network can communicate with the iTach without requiring individual peripheral devices for each one, reducing cost and installation time. Once properly installed, the iTach solution does not require line of sight to command your entertainment equipment (or other installed devices). All iTach communications are done through the network, and even available from the Internet, allowing for hardware settings in the home or office to be controlled on the go. Additionally, more than one IR device can be controlled from the single iTach or with other iTach units working in concert to automate lighting, drapes, security systems, and more.

Conclusion

The value of a device does not rest solely on its price point, but also on its designed function, intended purpose, and necessary upkeep. A single user install situation without need to control hardware from the network or the need for expansion to control hardware beyond infrared would find an IR dongle to be a good choice since the purpose of the control hardware matches with the intended use. A multiple user install situation with the requirment to control hardware without line of sight, or from the network, and desiring the ability to control other hardware types (RS232 and relay) now and in the future, would find the iTach a good choice for their install, since the control solution dictates the need for such a device. The functionality and end result of your install will always depend upon your ability to recognize which device will most fulfill the needs of the installation, or sometimes more importantly the customer or end user.

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