Personal computers as home entertainment centres

It's been mentioned in the forums a few times, so I'll bring it to the forefront. I think it's pretty much inevitable that personal computers are going to play a bigger role in the houses of tomorrow than they do today. While today, I have a personal computer controlling my lights and playing my media, this is not the norm. The masses are still using physical vs. virtual media.

For me, this transition was natural, mainly because I'm lazy. I mean, who wants to keep shuffling around CDs all the time just because I want to listen to a different band? Pointing and clicking for audio is where it's at. With a big enough hard drive, you can rip DVDs as you purchase them and view them on-demand at any time as well. Not to mention the TiVo-like applications that can turn your computer into a personal video recorder.

The most vocal objection I hear to this paradigm is, "I don't want to watch movies on my computer." My response: Has nobody ever heard of TV-out? Most video cards will at least have a composite out, if not S-Video. After all, TiVos are basically a subset of a personal computer with respect to their abilities and functionality, and people use those with reckless abandon.

If more people *did* watch movies and television on their computers (while hooked up to their television), the most vocal objection I would expect to hear is, "There is too much fan-noise." And I would agree. S2K and others have brought up some fantastic solutions to this problem in the forums, so I won't duplicate them here.

My question to you is: What is necessary to help speed this into the mainstream? The faster this becomes the norm, the sooner I can say something like, "Hey, I missed CSI last night, can you upload it to me?" I can *almost* do this now, mainly because my social circle is comprised of a lot of geeks like me :) Still, I can't wait for this attitude to become more prevalent.

If the network is the computer, then the media is the network.

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