

Hitachi 10-GIG Cable Soars

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By Matt Brunk

I mentioned last year in [Save Your Pennies](#) that China's thirst for natural resources would be booming out of sight.

This past April, Financial Times reported that ["Copper Shows No Signs of Cooling."](#)

Then last week distribution told me politely "don't quote cable prices beyond two weeks."

It's that time of year again when private and parochial schools begin the process of getting ready for summer and that means work. This is the time to cable the class rooms and get those networks humming before school starts again. This summer will be different.

Hitachi provides horizontal and riser Category 6A plenum wiring (**Supra 10G**) with a street price starting somewhere between \$900-1200 for a thousand feet but don't quote me on that. This is a 10 GIG beast and the honcho that pulls these drops isn't going to be old Matt. No, I publicly announced that I could still pull wire with the best of them- that was a mistake. This is a task that promptly needs delegation.

10-GIG wiring requires a lot of careful consideration. It's one of those decisions that you can't back pedal on and once you decide, you decide. Campuses are stepping back when we discuss cost. Of course the labor increases too since Hoss Cartwright and his buddies are going to install this stuff while less drops can be effectively pulled together just because of the size of the cable- and this adds to the cost of labor. More bandwidth means different connectors, patch panels and patch cords which tacks on more costs. Then you'd better make sure you have plenty of room in the pull boxes, conduits, and behind and inside your wall rings and termination boxes. The Category 6A cable is a big daddy cable.

I remain quoting Dupont Corporation's Blue Book Installers Cabling Guide that plenum has far more benefits than just to meet fire code. Don't use PVC and remember that temperature changes resistance and plenum rated wiring holds up against temperature changes in the walls and hot ceilings far better than what PVC does. Data throughput is better. Okay, now contrast the fact that PVC wire is always much cheaper than plenum coupled with the myth that plenum is for fire code requirements only.

While the Hitachi wire is exceptional and still no matter what I say or argue about the future- the school administrators shake their heads and ponder the costs. Here's why I think they should consider buying Category 6A and not Category 5e.

- World copper prices are expected to remain and are likely to climb further
- Installing Category 5a for any school seems a step backward especially for any new construction
- Deploying fiber to the desktop- there's still a barrier and it comes down to price since supply of fiber installation companies pales in comparison to UTP installation. It's the same effect that we have in energy with heat pump installers vs. Alternative Energy Systems installers.
- Campus applications readying for IP: replacement of high cost and aging sound systems (Paging); mechanical school bell systems; time clocks; telephony; data; video; alarm signaling/monitoring; video cameras; and any form of **"Emergency Notification."** Throw it all together in the convergence initiative and it still takes BANDWIDTH.

As of June 1st another cable manufacturer **Berk-Tek**, recently announced that bulk cable prices will increase between 3 – 10 percent. Convergence may or may not be a good idea but my prediction is that companies will be forced to converge if they plan to build new copper cable plants. This interesting twist in the market forces at work pushing convergence indirectly to either one cable to the desktop or developing new methods to allow rapid and less costly deployment of fiber-to-the-desk will be interesting to watch.

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