

Product Review- 3Com Network Jacks



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The 3Com Network Jack isn't new and back in January, 2002, when their Product Manager sent me some NJ100's to test and evaluate I was excited then as I am today about this product.



We still have those Network Jacks installed on our LAN which extends to our "Phone Shack" behind our building. We use the Network Jack ports to test gear and for our iMac that resides in the Phone Shack. Its source of power is an older Ethernet Power Supply (24V).

To their credit, 3Com has taken the product into a global market and with options of fiber, copper, PoE, and more.

The Network Jacks have dip switches that will accept PoE 24V, 48V and the new 802.3af standard. The first port forwards 802.3af power for compatible IP telephones. The IP telephones must support 802.3af otherwise you will need two drops which the Network Jacks can accommodate by using a compatible snap in jack from Amp, Avaya, Hubbell, Ortronics, or Panduit by using the pass through ports on the side which support two additional drops- 2 pass throughs and one for the Network Jack.

The Network Jacks deliver four "switched" 10/100 Mbps ports by utilizing just one Cat5e drop. That's great news for all those cubicle sufferers that need more ports and don't have any room in the power poles or the walker ducts are jammed tight. The product fits in so many environments- that I wouldn't want to say it's a niche but since I've got it, had it, used it, installed it- well; it's a niche in its own right and it sells itself.



One of my campus customers is now convinced too and we are happily delivering Network Jacks simply to give teacher classrooms more switched ports and to remove the HUBS. Keep those networks flat! The Network Jack fulfills this promise and provides the users what they want most- more ports.

For IP-telephony, these jacks meet my five criteria for SIMPLE deployments of VoIP:

Simplicity – keep it simple because you have to support it.

Overall Design – is considerate of remote power, packet performance, installation

Low Cost – because it is low cost, easier to install than another drop or multiple drops, is a blessing when dealing when power poles and modular furniture- more is delivered than less while using less resources to do the job.

Value – the product delivers value to the end user, client.

Quality - the product performs at least from our experience since 2002, we've never had a Network Jack failure, return, or service issue.

For a telephone trick- we have a campus customer with direct buried cable between two buildings. We connected the AT&T cable 26AWG, using 4-pairs to EtherNet jacks on both ends with protection. Next, we patched in PoE to the Network Jack and a data port from the LAN switch and delivered 4 10MBPS ports downstream to the Network Jack. The Network Jack is auto sensing and the LAN port we used was purposely 10MBPS not 10/100 MBPS. The remote building now has four 10 Mbps switched ports- very low cost and serves their immediate needs. There's a lot you can do with a very little Network Jack, very cool back in 2002, very cool today.

This is one product that is easy to champion. We've installed these Network Jacks and now carry them onboard since it's a very easy solution that saves time and money while delivering more ports. 3Com also provides a 24-port PoE solution for these network jacks and for those weary of cabling you can be very creative with this solution. They also come in two colors- creme or black and don't call them cute until after you've used them.

Here is a [product guide](#) (PDF).

Here is more information and details on the [3Com Network Jack \(IntelliJacks\)](#).

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