



Defining Structured Cabling

By Carol Everett Oliver, RCDD, Berk-Tek, a Nexans Company

Structured cabling is the essence of our industry. But, defining structured cabling is both simple and complex. As more and more IP devices are being added to the network, the structured cabling system becomes the tie that binds – the key to any network’s reliability. Standards’ based infrastructures are now replacing previously proprietary cabling systems, and as our industry enters these new markets and faces new trades, structured cabling becomes ever-evolving, yet constant.

So, as the BICSI Fall Conference coincided with the deadline of this month’s Reel Time article, I thought that conducting a “person-on-the-street” interview with attending experts, from all facets of our industry, was the best way to tackle this subject matter. The question posed was “What is structured cabling?” and/or “What does structured cabling mean to you?” A lot of answers were concise and to the point, while some provided insight and clarity of the changing role and definition. All vary, some only slightly, but all hit the mark. This may be one article that many readers will keep as reference and find themselves repeating some of these great quotes. And, if you do, please give credit to the source(s). ■



Tony Irujo, Sales Engineer, OFS (Sturbridge, MA):

“Structured cabling is an organized method of deploying cabling so you can easily make moves/adds/changes, and upgrade your network when needed, in a neat, efficient, and ‘structured’ manner.”



Geoff Anderson, National Marketing Manager for security and surveillance products, JVC Professional Products Company (Wayne, NJ):

“A structured cabling system is designed in such a way that it will deliver reliable connectivity from one end to the other. This means that when I put my analog or IP network cameras on one end

of the building I know that they will connect to the Digital Video Recorder (DVR) or Network Video Recorder (NVR) on the other end (in the TR) without having to worry about what is in between.”



Theron “TJ” Roe, RCDD, Area Manager, GarrettCom (Hockessin, DE):

“A structured cabling system is the basic infrastructure in a building or campus that will support all the standards’ based network applications, both planned now and in the future. With the proliferation of IP devices in traditional spaces, which were formerly proprietary, like IP video, physical security and building automation, this could encompass virtually every system in a building or campus running over one common network.”



Ed Donelan, Founder and President of Telecom Infrastructure Corp. (New York, NY) and President of BICSI:

"As a contractor for the last 23 years it's changed dramatically, but structured cabling to me is really the fabric; fiber, copper and wireless, of information transport systems within buildings and within campuses connecting communities."



Brian Rhynas, RCDD, President, Corporate Technology Solutions (Tempe, AZ):

"Structured cabling and guidelines is the organized process on how low-voltage cabling should be installed."



Kevin St. Cyr, President of Berk-Tek, a Nexans Co. (New Holland, PA):

"Structured cabling is a standards' based end-to-end cabling system that attaches all IP devices. But, what this really means to me is that as convergence to IP expands, more and more devices will be attached to a structured cabling based network, this creates a demand for quality cabling, such as fiber optic and four-pair copper cables from Berk-Tek."



Chuck Wilson, RCDD, NTS, OSP; President and COO of Wilson Technology Group (Brooksville, FL) and BICSI U.S. Southeast Director:

"Structured cabling is the infrastructure, and when installed properly, will support the transport of all voice, data and video across the network."



John Calomino, Senior Infrastructure Engineer, Blue Cross of Northeastern PA (Willkes-Barre, PA):

"I believe that structured cabling is the keystone to any network – LAN, WAN, SAN or WLAN – structured cabling brings everything together, so the end user has a seamless interface to all of the resources necessary to complete the task at hand. Who would have ever thought that 10 Gigabit Ethernet would have been a reality on both copper and fiber as we have today? We now need to focus on supporting 40 and 100 Gig across our structured cabling systems for the near future. What's next? Only time will tell."



Brian Ensign, RCDD/NTS/OSP, CSI, Director of Technology for Ortronics/Legrand (New London, CT) and BICSI Northeast Region Director:

"Structured cabling is the

information highway for multiple users with multiple exposure to the network for today's as well as tomorrow's emerging IP applications."



Karl Griffith, Director of Enterprise Markets, Graybar Electric Company (St. Louis, MO):

"Structured cabling is the communications infrastructure in commercial buildings, which includes the cabling media and all associated products, such as connectivity and pathway components, to support all IP applications throughout the building." ■

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