

Most Appropriate System

Guiding our clients into the future with Digi-Link's network to perform solutions.

10G Base-T. Fiber Optics. Gigabit Technologies. The future of category 5e, Cat 6 and Cat 6(A). The options can be confusing. Your clients rely on you to help them navigate the future of LAN technology. But how do you determine what will be best for them?

About Changing Technology

Step back and observe how technology is changing. It can be difficult cutting through the hype to determine which of today's ideas will be tomorrow's reality, but in general, the best place to begin is with the standards.

By and large, it is 10G technologies that will change the landscape for LAN users in the coming decade. The recent completion of the 10G Base-T as per IEEE.802.3an, will increase the demands made on both existing systems and newer hardware. 10G will be the main driving factor for new technologies and should be incorporated into your thinking early.

Assessing Your Client's Needs

Your job is to ensure that the customers get the most out of the LAN they can afford, and the cabling system installed to support it. Unfortunately, investing in a cabling system to avoid obsolescence often conflicts with the reality of providing adequate service over a given time at the lowest cost. How can you resolve those conflicts?

It is important to sit with your client and review the various considerations, rating them for level of importance and need. The following are some factors to consider:

Budget

Are there financial limits to your client's overall investment in Information Systems? What share can the cabling system represent? This is always a good place to start, to build a balance between budget and performance expectations. Budget usually has a heavy influence on a project, and should be weighed in relative importance to other factors.

Building Space: Owned, Leased or Rented?

How willing is the client to invest in the building infrastructure? Length of building occupancy can vary among users, and the investments in their cabling systems can sometimes be shared with the landlord or expensed as a tenant improvement. Ownership does not always assume a long-term investment strategy in the building's infrastructure.

Assessing client's requirements

	Category 5 and 5e	Category 6	Category 6(A) & Fiber
MIGRATION	More than 5 years	2-5 years	Less than 2 years
PLANNED LIFE / PAYBACK	Under 5 years	5-20 years	Over 20 years
CAPITAL BUDGET	Small	Midline	Large

Assessing client's requirements

NETWORK TRAFFIC	Low	Midline/Mixture	High
APPLICATION / USE	Simple/small files	Mixed files	Complex/Large files
NATURE OF DATA	Non-critical messaging or file transfer	Mixture	Mission critical Real time
TOLERANCE OF BER	High	Midline	Low

What is the role of information systems?

What is the network's role in supporting critical day-to-day business functions? Network traffic, application in use, and the nature of the data are all indicators.

What is planned system migration?

Will keeping up with faster, higher bandwidth LAN applications become a strategic necessity for business survival? Some business use LANs for product development or a foundation for critical day-to-day operation. A 10G Base-T implementation of Ethernet is the next increment for most LAN systems today. How quickly will the demands on this network grow?

What is user/system tolerance level?

Can the business or its users tolerate interruptions or traffic congestions? An assessment of the client's current satisfaction level may expose opportunities for improvements.

Network life expectancy.

What is the planned service life of the system? Typically service life and budget must be weighed against one another. Determine which should take precedence, cost or a longer-term network viability.