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It's a jungle under there

Device safely tucks away computer cables

By Sarah Toland, For the Camera
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Kick the wrong computer cable, lose a term paper. Add a new system, and you might spend the whole day rerouting wires. Want to move your desk to a new office?

If you don't have a degree in cable networking, you'll have to hire an IT expert to configure the computer entrails of plugs, parts, wires and whatnot.



Sammy Dallal

Robert Bellows, left, and John Mancino, entrepreneurs from Boulder, show off their product, The Cable Manager. It's designed to organize power and network cables.

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This spring, though, a different option for cable management quietly entered the technology market.

The Complete Cable Manager is the premier product from the new Gunbarrel-based company Cable-Safe, and co-founders John Mancino and Robert Bellows think The Cable Manager may be the solution to the under-desk jungle that frustrates so many students, corporate employees and home office upstarts.

"There's nothing else like (The Cable Manager) out there," says Bellows, who also founded Wobbly Wedge, a local company that manufactures stabilizing shims for unsteady furniture. "Most cable management means that you make zip ties and tie everything together. Our system is designed to store all the cables separately and get them off the floor."

The Cable Manager is straightforward in concept: The device organizes cables and accessories into one unit, lifting everything off the floor and arranging it into a one-plug piece for quick installation and transfer.


Made from a fiber-filled nylon, the product holds up to 14 computer cables that hang off the primary part of the piece. Above these cable hooks, a secure shelf provides space for hubs, modems and power adapters while power strips and excess cable lengths can be attached onto additional hooks. The entire unit clamps under a desktop, through a grommet hole or onto a wall mounting system.

In addition, the device offers a clamping system that lets you fasten wires temporarily while relocating cables. A color-coded labeling feature also allows each cable to be identified in five different places above and below a desktop.

According to Bellows, The Cable Manager is designed to function as a single-piece system capable of transforming below-desk computer clutter into an accessible and safe unit.

Bellows says that installation of the device prevents tangles, precludes tracing problems





and reduces the equipment damage, data loss and other related malfunctions caused by unintentional disconnects.

Most sales of The Cable Manager have occurred online at Cable-Safe's Web site, www.cable-safe.com. The product has been installed in a handful of businesses in the western United States and Canada, including Tundra Specialties, a national food service parts and accessories company in Boulder County. Tundra has mounted more than 40 Cable Managers under its workstations after the company first sampled the product last winter.

"They've been a dream come true as far as grabbing the cables, picking them up off the floor and holding the integrity when going into the network," says Janet Jamison, general manager at Tundra Specialties "I bought an inventory of (The Cable Manager) so that we can put them in with every new computer station we add."

Tundra Specialties also is one of the few companies to directly vend the product. The food equipment dealer retails The Cable Manager in its 2004-2005 parts catalog distributed to restaurants across the country. Since this year's June mailing, Tundra Specialties has sold about 150 of the devices.

The other primary vendor of the product is BCinteriors, a commercial furniture design company located in Boulder. The majority of BCI's clients, according to BCI principal Mike Cohagan, are high-tech businesses — an ideal demographic for The Cable Manager.

"Knowing the frustration most of my customers have with their cables, I took one look at (The Cable Manager) and knew it would be a winner," says Cohagan, who started selling the product in July. "It's so well-engineered; it's quite a product."

Despite positive reviews from local companies and other Cable Manager customers, Bellows and Mancino are a bit disappointed by the product's initial revenues.

"Sales are a little slower than I expected," says Mancino, 57, a former software developer. "I thought we'd be doing a little more retail than we are, (but) my expectations were probably not that realistic."

The Cable Manager sells in small, independent computer stores and the Internet, not big-box chain stores, Bellows says, because Cable-Safe has just a single stockkeeping unit number, or SKU, for the one product.

"Everyone is interested from Best Buy on down," says Bellows, 55. "But they don't want to deal with a single SKU. We have to develop 10 to 15 products before we can get into these types of stores."

The two, self-described "semi-retired" entrepreneurs, haven't decided if they want to point their young company in the direction of larger, mainstream stores.

"We have enough ideas to do it, but whether we do, we just don't know," Bellows says. "Right now, our objective is to go straight to the consumer, and we'll go to the businesses and contractors at a slower pace."

The Cable Manager sells for \$34.95. The Professional Installer Kit, designed for multi-office installation with 10 complete models, sells for \$315. Cable-Safe also features an expansion kit for The Cable Manager, which allows the unit to hold up to 30 cables.

"We feel there's a huge market and a huge need for (The Cable Manager)," Bellows says. "We get stories back all the time from happy customers: One guy e-mailed us just to tell us how excited he was to get his cables off the floor because his 9-month-old was chewing on them and rummaging around."