The Cable Dresser
vs.
The Cable Comb & The Cable Organizing Tool

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Introduction

Without a doubt the most dreaded job during a cabling installation was dressing cable by hand. What made this such a miserable job was the aligning and untangling of the cables which required a high degree of patience by the installer. If aligning the cables on the outside of a cable bundle wasn't enough to try the patience of the installer, then dealing with the numerous tangled cables you were trying to align would have most installers pulling their hair out. To compound matters even further, the longer the cable run the more entangled the cables became and if the cable bundle made a turn to the left or right or had a change in elevation, the job became even more difficult. Some of these cables would move from the inside to the outside of the turn and vice versa, again adding more tangled cables for the installer to manage. Given the challenges that dressing cable presents, of course, requires a tool that will meet these challenges. The choice you have now is three manufactures with two different approaches for dressing cable.

In 2004, there was the Cable Dresser by PatchPanel Tools, then in 2007, Acom Tools introduced the Cable Comb and in 2008, Panduit brought to market their Cable Bundle Organizing Tool . All of these tools provide the installer an alternative to dressing cable by hand, but which one of these tools will best meet the needs of the installer and your company?

The objective when dressing a cable bundle by hand was to have an aesthetically pleasing bundle representing a high quality installation. That objective has not changed but how this is accomplished by Acom Tools, Cable Comb Panduit's, Cable Bundle Organizing Tool and PatchPanel Tools, Cable Dresser is worth examining. When dressing a cable bundle by hand the installer was required to align the cables on the outside of the cable bundle. The Cable Dresser follows this same approach. The Cable Comb and the Cable Bundle Organizing Tool align all the cables in a bundle. We are not able to tell you the reasoning behind their designs but we can tell you what you will encounter when they are used for dressing a cable bundle.

Whether you are dressing cable by hand, using the Cable Dresser, the Cable Comb or the Cable Bundle Organizing Tool, it's a two-step process. First, the untangling of the cables, and Second, the alignment of these cables. Unfortunately, there is a misconception that when using these tools, this two-step process has been completely eliminated. What these tools actually accomplish is they eliminate the alignment of the cables, which is a huge improvement over dressing a cable bundle by hand, but they do very little if anything during the untangling of these cables.

So, what actually happens when dressing a cable bundle using the Cable Comb the Cable Bundle Organizing Tool or the Cable Dresser ? When you begin pulling any of these tools through the cable bundle, as long as there are no tangled cables or at least slack in those that are, the tool will be able to assist in moving the cables into the desired position. As the tool approaches the area where the cables are tangled the amount of slack becomes less and as a result the tool becomes increasingly more difficult to move. Eventually the installer will not be able to proceed any further until he or she removes the tangled cables. It should now be apparent, when using the Cable Comb or the Cable Bundle Organizing Tool, which align all the cables in a 24 cable bundle, you will be required to untangle one hundred percent of all the cables during the cable installation. This of course is a dramatic change from the practice of dressing a cable bundle by hand where you were only concerned with the cables on the outside of the bundle. Why Acom Tools and Panduit only offer a tool that will dress a twenty-four cable bundle strongly points to the difficulties tangled cables can present for the installer.

Riser Closets

Unfortunately, for the installer, dressing cable is not limited to a Telecommunications Closet. If you are installing cable in a multi-story building you may be required to dress cable passing through a Riser Closet. Dressing a Riser Closet is one of the most difficult and challenging dressing scenarios confronting the installer. What makes this a difficult dress? You're not at either end of the cable bundle, you're in a closet where the cables transverse from one floor to the next and with the cable path changing from vertical to horizontal.   Any tangled cables encountered while you are dressing by hand cannot be removed, but must be moved or slid from one side of the closet or room to the other side. The trick here is to leave enough slack in the cable run allowing you to work these tangled cables to one side of the closet. Once this tangled mess (sometimes referred to as a Rats Nest) is moved to one side of the closet or room, the excess slack is then pulled into the ceiling or conduit, hiding the tangled mess.

How does Acom Tools, Cable Comb and Panduit's, Cable Bundle Organizing Tool dress a Raiser Closet? Because they align all the cables in the bundle, you'll be confronted with the largest Rats Nest possible and will have to spend the additional time required to work these tangled cables to one end of the closet or room. Or maybe you revert back to dressing these cables by hand.

How does PatchPanel Tools, Cable Dresser handle dressing a Raiser Closet? The CD 24 or CD 48 will align the cables on the outside of the cable bundle for the installer, keeping the Rats Nest to a minimum, so you'll be able to dress a Riser Closet in less time than Acom Tools Cable Comb , Panduit's Cable Bundle Organizing Tool or by hand.

Last Minute Adds

How do each of these tools handle adding cable to an existing bundle for those last minute adds? Acom Tools, Cable Comb and Panduit's, Cable Bundle Organizing Tool, do not have any recommendations that we know of for adding cables to an existing bundle. It appears in this situation the cables in the existing bundle would need to be returned to their original position they held in the tool during the first dressing of the cable bundle. Then you would need to place the new cables you were adding to the bundle in the tool. Or maybe, Acom and Panduit would recommend the installer add the new cables to the bundle by hand. Unfortunately, the approach used when adding cables to an existing bundle appears to be an open issue with the Cable Comb and the Cable Bundle Organizing Tool.

How does PatchPanel Tools "Cable Dresser" handle adding cables to an existing bundle? Well, it's pretty straight forward, you'll be placing the tool around the existing bundle. If you're using the CD 24, a twenty-four cable bundle has ten cables in the center of the tool and fourteen cables on the outside. The distributions of the cables in the "Cable Dresser" tool is left up to the installer. A simple solution provided by a simple design!

Summary

When the installer was dressing a cable bundle by hand the installer was required to untangle the cables on the outside of the bundle. The Cable Comb by Acom Tools and The Cable Bundle Organizing Tool by Panduit, align all the cables in a twenty-four cable bundle. These two tools, similar in design, re-define the approach to cable dressing. Instead of untangling only the cables on the outside of each bundle you will now need to untangle 100 % of the tangled cables in the Telecommunications Closet. If you're dressing a Raiser Closet, do you dress the cables by hand or do you attempt to use either of these tools knowing you'll have the largest Rats Nest possible to manage? And if you are adding cables to an

existing bundle, do you really want to use the ☐Cable Comb ☐ or ☐The Cable Bundle Organizing Tool☐ or would you rather dress these cables by hand?

The Cable Dresser's split-face design provides a common sense approach to dressing cable. Whether you are dressing a Telecommunications Closet, Riser Closet or adding cables to an existing cable bundle, you will complete the job in the shortest time possible and with less frustration than either Acom Tools, ☐Cable Comb☐,Panduit's, ☐Cable Bundle Organizing Tool☐,or dressing by hand. You also have the option of dressing a Twenty-Four or Forty-Eight cable bundle. Choosing the CD 48 not only reduces the number of bundles you will need to dress but also the number of cable bundle ties or straps by fifty percent for the entire installation. The CD 48 also reduces the number of tangled cable you'll need to manage over the CD 24 by fifty percent. It's difficult to argue with the logic or the numbers.

The "Cable Dresser" is simply the best tool out there !