



AMX Adopts HDBaseT for Long-Distance HDMI

AMX replaced its two-wire UTPro 8x8 HDMI switcher with an HDBaseT one-wire version, delivering uncompressed video, audio and NetLinx control over 100 meters of Cat 5.



AMX's \$11,900 (retail) UTPro 8x8 ships with the HDBaseT-enabled HDMI switcher and eight receivers, which makes it a better choice than similar HDMI switchers from "Extra" and "Crestra."

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When we saw it at [CEDIA 2009](#), we applauded AMX/Autopatch's new UTPro 8x8 switcher which delivered uncompressed video, audio and AMX control signals across two pair of Cat 5 cables.

Dealers loved the product for its "Instagate" fast-switching capabilities, eliminating the long lags typically associated with HDMI switching.

During a [demo at the AMX booth last year](#), Autopatch product manager Paul Hand showed just how quickly the TV responds when an HDMI source is switched – about one second.

"We're continuously validating all of the connections," he said.

That product never shipped ... but that's the good news.

HDBaseT is in the House

Shortly after demonstrating the UTPro 0808, employing AMX's own Cat 5 transport technology, the company discovered [HDBaseT](#) technology from Valens Semiconductor.

HDBaseT enables the UTPro 8x8 to deliver the same audio, video and control functionality as before, but it only requires a single Cat 5 (or better) cable. Furthermore, [HDBaseT](#) ups the distance for Cat 5 distribution to 100 meters (330 feet).



The new UTPro is "virtually the same product except that every output to the receivers can go much greater distances – up to 100 meters – over a single Cat 5," Hand tells CE Pro.

Previously, he adds, "we were looking at 100 feet or 150 feet max, even with two Cat 5. We just doubled the capability."

Hand says AMX has been working with Valens for "quite awhile, watching the technology develop and staying in touch with them."

Since HDBaseT was refined late last year, AMX saw little reason to proceed with a two-wire solution. The new UTPro 8x8 is now shipping at a retail price of \$11,900, just like before. The price includes eight receivers, making the product particularly affordable.

Featuring AMX's NetLinx protocol, the UTPro products plug right into an AMX ecosystem.

"Every receiver shows up as a native NetLinx control port, just like you'd see on a NetLinx central controller," says Hand. "It's like a free control point at every display."

Are HDBaseT Products Interoperable?

So far, three companies have implemented HDBaseT in their Cat 5 audio/video/control switchers and extenders – [Gefen \(HDMI Extender\)](#), Crestron ([DigitalMedia 8G](#)) and AMX.

While Valens touts the technology as a standard, however, the existing products are not interoperable.

Hand considers AMX's solution to be a "proprietary implementation" of HDBaseT, similar to the way AMX, Crestron and others implement the ZigBee automation protocol.