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Ethernet cable with broken clip
Somewhere the little plastic clip broke off the connector.

I have a printer that connects to my LAN hub with a 50-foot CAT-5 cable. Somehow, somewhere the little plastic clip broke off the connector.
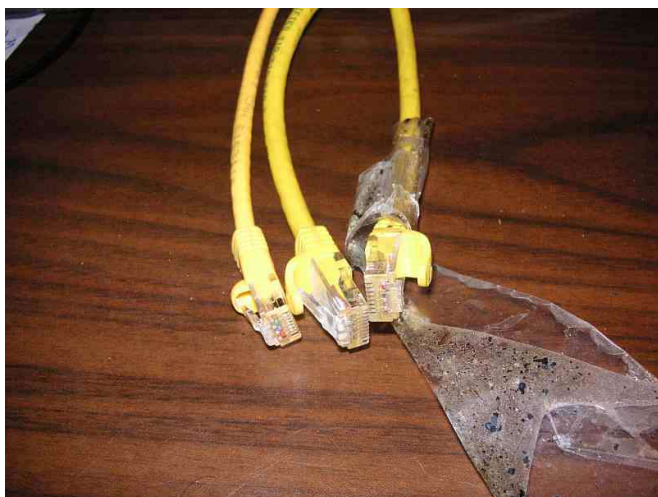
I just slid the connector into the printer and figured it would stay. Boy I got that wrong. It seemed like some hidden force of nature would always make the cable slide right on out of the printer socket. My first jury-rigged fix was to use some clear strapping tape to try and hold the cable into the socket. The tape soon lost its grip on the side of the printer and the cable was always out of the socket. OK, the next plan was to just turn the printer 90 degrees so the back where the cable came out was mashed against the wall. You might think it would be impossible for the cable to come out. Your thinking would be wrong.

Lately, I have taken to a phrase. That phrase is "At my station in life....." Sure, I am an

engineer that hates wasting money and likes to think he is clever enough to workaround niggling problems. But at my station in life, it is ridiculous to have to climb over my living room futon to get to the back of the printer to stick in some execrable little yellow connector with the broken clip. Over and over and over. So I fire up my TurboCAD 15 Professional and open up the floor-plan I made of the Domicile of the Future. A quick application of the "Distance" tool and I saw I needed a 50-foot cable. I jump on a Harley, go to Fry's in Sunnyvale and buy four different 50-foot CAT-5 cables.

It was great going to Fry's on a Monday morning since a nice woman actually came over and assisted me. Her assistance was critical, since, of the first two cable I picked out, one was shielded and the other was a cross-over cable. So we pick out 4 nifty colors of standard CAT-5, and I run three of them to the printer, and rip out that craptastic broken one. I connected my Obihai VOIP box, and the other new cable I just kept as a spare in case I have a laptop I want to use at the printer desk.

Here is the CAT-5 cable with the broken tab on the right. You can see the grungy tape that I tried to use to hold the connector into the printer. I suffered with this kludge for years.

The 50-foot CAT-5 cables cost $22 each. So I am out about a hundred bucks. And I also value my time, from when I was a consultant. So you can add another hundred for the time it took to get to Fry's and back. But at my station in life, 200 bucks is a small price to pay to relieve myself of the aggravation of having a cable that made me homicidal every time it popped out of the printer. I cut both ends off of it so no one at the Sunnyvale dump is tempted to use it.

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Here is a close-up of the CAT-5 connector with the broken tab, on the right. The other end is on the left, it worked just dandy on the hub. Yeah, I considered just reversing the cable and using the good side on the printer, but I knew it was inevitable the broken connector would just pop out of the hub one day, to re-incense me. I also considered borrowing a crimper to replace the broken connector.

As my Jerk Brother Roger would say "You tryin' to make a career out of this?" Naw, buy a new cable at Fry's cut this one into a dozen little pieces, just for the sheer satisfaction of hurting something that hurt me first, and be done with it. Joy, simple unadulterated joy.