

Brocade takes on Cisco in the campus

New Brocade switches aimed at boosting performance, lowering cost in enterprise networks

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Managing Editor, Network World | NOV 8, 2011 9:19 AM PT

[Brocade](#) this week has unveiled switches for the enterprise campus designed to help users to affordably scale their networks.

The Ethernet switches are intended to attract customers looking for increased price/performance at lower cost. They are aimed directly at [Cisco's dominance in enterprise switching](#), with Brocade claiming that they offer five times the bandwidth at one-third the cost of comparable Cisco products.

The first of these new products is the Brocade ICX 6610, an Ethernet access switch that features a stacking bandwidth of 320Gbps -- five times that of Cisco and other competitors, Brocade says -- and 8x10 Gigabit Ethernet uplink ports.

The 6610 is available in 24- or 48-port RJ45 configurations, and 24-port SFP. There's a PoE+ option available for the switches, to power [VoIP](#) phones or IP video cameras. The uplinks can be either 8x Gigabit Ethernet SFP, or 8x10G Ethernet SFP+, with an additional license.

The dedicated stacking ports are 4x40G Ethernet QSFP.

The 6610s support full Layer 3 capabilities -- IPv4, [IPv6](#) and multicast -- sFlow for network traffic accounting, 12,000 ACLs, 16,000 routes, 32,000 MAC table entries and 8,000 multicast groups. The line also features hitless stacking failover, redundant stacking links and redundant, removable, load-sharing power supplies and fans.

For the aggregation and core areas of the network, Brocade also rolled out new blades and performance and scalability enhancements for its FastIron SX series of chassis-based switches. That line also includes the new high-density 8x10G Ethernet blades, which enables the FastIron SX to scale up to 128 ports of 10G Ethernet, up to four times the port density of the previous generation.

Other enhancements to the line include hitless failover to provide high levels of availability, Multi-Chassis Trunking (MCT) for active-active resiliency that's designed to overcome the traditional active-passive redundancy of Spanning Tree, plus MACsec encryption and Energy Efficient Ethernet-ready hardware for investment protection.

MCT lets two FSX chassis operate as a single fully redundant active/active logical switch with no Spanning Tree overhead, Brocade says. It is a Brocade-developed technology and is not based on the IEEE's Shortest Path Bridging or the IETF's TRILL specifications.

Hitless failover and in-service software upgrades mean there's no service interruption with outages or new software image loading. The FSX also features hot module and line card replacement.

Brocade also claims the FastIron SX chassis switches are 40% less than the Cisco Catalyst 6500 and Nexus 7000 switches per 10G Ethernet port.

The Brocade ICX 6610 will be available this month starting at \$5,595. The new FastIron SX Series modules will also be available this month, with a starting price of \$4,495. Brocade says the switches are also eligible for the company's [network subscription purchasing service](#).

MCT will be available in early 2012 for the FastIron SX Series. Brocade has also reduced the price of its FCX Series stackable switches by an average of 20%.