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Date: Mar 30 2000 06:45:28 EST
From: "Hewie's Favorites" <hewie@hewie.net>
Subject: Hewie's Newsletter 000330

I saw this article this morning. If you find the web too slow, if you are using any of the high Bandwith services (cable, DSL, T-1, etc.), or are planning to, this will be of interest. Some links may wrap and lose part of the link. If that happens, copy and paste the entire link to your browser and then remove spaces.

Hewie

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The Fiber-Optics Challenge

URL:

http://chkpt.zdnet.com/chkpt/adem2fpf/www.anchordesk.com/story/story_4593.html

Berst Alert

Jesse Berst, Editorial DirectorZDNet AnchorDesk

Thursday, March 30, 2000

Six technologies are racing to deliver high-speed Internet access to your living room. Cable modems, DSL, wireless, satellite and power lines are most familiar. Some consider fiber optics the ultimate choice. It's so good, it could make all the other obsolete.

Optical networks transform data into beams of light that can travel at extraordinary speeds -- 10 Gbps and beyond. Promising to shatter Internet bottlenecks. But don't hold your breath. For most of us, fiber-to-the-home (FTTH) -- enticing as it sounds -- remains on the horizon. I'll explain.

THE RACE IS ON

Cisco, Nortel and Lucent are spending billions to dominate the optical networks market. [Click for more.](#)

Sales of optical-related networking gear will almost double from \$48 billion this year to \$90 billion in 2003, according to market research firm RHK. [Click for more.](#)

Trials that extend fiber-optic cable into homes are under way coast to coast:

BellSouth started testing a system in an Atlanta suburb late last year. [Click for more](#) The Palo Alto (CA) City Council will spend \$380,000 on a FTTH project later this spring. [Click for more.](#)

WHAT YOU GET

As MIT's Technology Review puts it, bandwidth is like a drug. Once you're hooked, the more you've got to have. [Click for more.](#) Optical networks

promise to feed that craving:

Relieving congested Net backbones Greatly expanding the capacity of networks Speeds of 10 Gbps and beyond Delivery in smaller, secondary markets. Click for more Enabling sophisticated multimedia offerings

THERE'S GOTTA BE A CATCH

And there is. Optical networks have been around a couple of decades now. Scientific American lists more than three dozen field trials and installations worldwide in that time. The holdup has to do with:

Cost. It continues to fall. But it's still steep at about \$1,500 for a one-time installation on a typical suburban home Technology. The fiber-optics space is changing rapidly. Firms are hesitant to build out a network today that may be obsolete tomorrow Installation factors. In new construction areas, laying new networks is not a problem. It's much harder in established neighborhoods. Competing standards. A group of companies are working on a Full Service Access Network (FSAN) architecture

I've seen predictions that optical networks will be delivering 100 Mbps to homes by 2005. That's overly optimistic. Widespread FTTH is at least 10 years off. But don't be surprised to see it in your workplace much sooner.

Does FTTH sound like the technology you've been waiting for? Use the TalkBack button to send me a message directly. Or talk it over with other readers in my Berst Alerts forum. And please take today's Quick Poll.

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Fiber Optics Online - Internet
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<http://www.zdnet.com/intweek/stories/columns/0,4164,2455509,00.html>
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