

ETHERNET STORMS THE METRO AREA

by Gerhard Kafka

The past two years have seen several significant advances in Ethernet's development. Launched 30 years ago as a LAN transport technology, it is now being deployed outside the enterprise to offer access and services over public networks. Over the next few years the Metro Ethernet market is expected to boom.

Following the introduction of the 10 Gb Ethernet in mid-2002, several concentrators and switches have appeared on the market. This standard defines two transmission speeds. 10Gbps is for use in traditional LANs and 9.953Gbps for applications in MANs and WANs. 9.953Gbps is equal to STM-64 in the SDH hierarchy.

Ethernet as a transport technology in public networks brings several advantages. It offers easy installation, low cost, high-speed and flexible provisioning of new services. The lack of QoS features can be easily compensated. Solutions include more bandwidth or combining with next generation SDH optimised for carrying Ethernet.

To help network operators offer carrier-class Ethernet services, the Metro Ethernet Forum (MEF) recently ratified the industry's first Ethernet service standard. The MEF Technical Specification, Ethernet Services Model Phase 1, brings the first formal definition of Ethernet service capabilities. A companion 'Services Definitions' specification will accompany the

standard. This will allow carriers, enterprises and equipment vendors to communicate with a common set of terminologies that define Ethernet services.

Visit Deutsche Telekom (Hall 26, Stand A01) to see an example of an Ethernet Private Line service. Launched late last year, its DDV-M Ethernet 100 is positioned as a cost-saving leased line service. It offers speeds of between 2Mbps and 100Mbps, providing a substitute for traditional services such as frame relay and ATM.

Equipment for building Metro Ethernet networks can be seen on the stands of: Lucent (Hall 27, Stand A16); Marconi (Hall 27, Stand D40); Pandatel (Hall 13, Stand D85); and RAD Data Communications (Hall 27, Stand B22).

According to the Gartner Group, the market for Ethernet-delivered services is worth some US\$14 bn. Infonetics Research predicts equipment revenues will reach \$4.4 bn by 2005. The MEF has surveyed the service provider community and has already found over 50 providers offering Ethernet-based services. ■

METRO ETHERNET IS A LOW COST MEANS OF OFFERING ETHERNET ACCESS AND ETHERNET-BASED SERVICES OVER MANs

US\$ Millions

