

Broadband access networks: evolution and convergence implications for equipment providers

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In this paper, the broadband access market is reviewed from the point of view of an equipment provider traditionally operating in the CATV marketplace. The network providers in this market include the range of Multiple System Operators (MSO) of the CATV distribution networks, the Broadband Service Providers who are currently overbuilding in many markets, and the traditional telephone company providers (ILEC) and their competitors (CLEC). An overview of the segments and the pressures which are driving common infrastructure solutions are considered. The several architectures employed will be required to work together for the delivery of essentially common information types. Consideration will be given to the end-customer desired information stream, the competitors and their goals to be achieved, some critical issues which will drive choices among the solutions, and ultimately the technological underpinnings of an eventual solution. Overlap examples of Metro Access, Hybrid-Fiber-Coax, and traditional telephony solutions will be given. The push to get the fiber closer to the home is leading to definition of enabling technologies, and the definition and limitations of some of these will be identified. The coaxial portion of the network will change, and some consideration for what these changes will mean will be considered.

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