

## FROM THE EDITOR



### Bandwidth and Brandwidth

Thanks to the Internet and video, music, and multimedia transmission needs, “bandwidth” has become a staple in the techie jargon. Notwithstanding continued competition from the copper twisted pair transmission medium, it now seems certain that fiber optics will garner a lion’s share of the telecommunications market in the years to come. Fiber scarcity and price are beginning to ease even as optical technology is moving beyond its

long-haul network core (undersea, for example). A trio of confluent events appear to render a predominantly all-optical network a likely scenario in the future. First, there is the development of dense wavelength-division multiplexing (DWDM) enabled optical fibers to carry unprecedented amounts of traffic over very long distances. Second, the advent of the Internet made such high bandwidth capabilities an absolute necessity (rather than a luxury). Third, a new wave of deregulation worldwide has opened the door for thousands of new communication services providers.

A majority of these new companies have proven to be willing customers for optical networks, spurring in turn, the “gigabit race”—another techie term—among corporate players such as Lucent, Nortel, and Alcatel. This is a compelling story in itself—one that we hope to further explore in these magazine pages in the future.

The other major story in the past few months has been the ping-pong match between the Old Economy and the New Economy. Interestingly, I read that the halos on this country’s most revered corporate brands appear to be losing some of their sheen. (Remember that joke about the astronauts spotting the burger-chain icon as soon as they landed on the moon?) This has been attributed to the clamor for attention by the “dot.coms” and the e-brands currently in vogue. Those of us who watched the last Super Bowl can definitely relate to this! Marketing experts claim that the marketplace has only limited “bandwidth” and consumers and investors cannot cope with the bewildering array of brand names.

Thus we are witnessing two divergent trends—one expanding (bandwidth) and the other shrinking (brandwidth)—in response to the same technological forces. Be that as it may, we at *Interface* are keeping our ear close to the ground. However, we do count on you readers to provide us with better sense for such shifts in the technological wind. Stay tuned.

Raj K.

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Editor

The Electrochemical Society *Interface* (USPS 010-327) (ISSN 1064-8208) is published quarterly by The Electrochemical Society, Inc., at 65 South Main Street, Pennington, NJ 08534-2839 USA. Subscription to members as part of membership service; subscription to nonmembers \$40.00 plus \$5.00 for postage outside U.S. Single copies \$5.00 to members; \$10.00 to nonmembers. © Copyright 2000 by The Electrochemical Society, Inc. Periodicals postage at Pennington, New Jersey, and at additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The Electrochemical Society, Inc., 65 South Main Street, Pennington, NJ 08534-2839.

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The Electrochemical Society

# INTERFACE

#### Published by:

The Electrochemical Society, Inc.  
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Pennington, NJ 08534-2839 USA  
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#### PRODUCTION NOTES

##### Design Consultant:

O&Y Design,  
Trenton, NJ

##### Printed by:

Cummings Printing Co.  
Hooksett, NH