HIGH SPEED FIBER OPTICS LOCAL AREA NETWORKS: DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION

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I. Introduction

The design of high speed local area networks (HSLAN) for communication among distributed devices requires solving problems in three areas: 1) the network medium and its topology, 2) the medium access control, and 3) the network interface. Considerable progress has been made in all areas. Accomplishments are divided into two groups according to their theoretical or experimental nature. A brief summary is given in Section II, including references to papers which appeared in the literature, as well as to PhD dissertations and technical reports published at Stanford University.

II. Summary of Accomplishments

2.1 Theoretical Studies

2.1.1 Background

There is a close relationship between the network topology and the access protocol. Some protocols, such as CSMA or PODA, require simply a broadcast feature; others, such as Expressnet*, require a linear ordering among the stations which can only be accomplished by a unidirectional medium. Among the many potential media available, optical fibers are particularly attractive for HSLANs due to their light weight, high bandwidth-distance product, and their immunity to EMI; thus we have considered them as the primary medium in our studies. In the selection of adequate topologies and user interconnection schemes, one has to take into account a number of constraints intrinsic to fiber optics components, such as transmitter power, coupler insertion loss, and receiver performance. These constraints have an impact on the size of the network (mainly in terms of the number of stations that can be accommodated). Two theoretical studies have been performed on that topic as described in this section. A third study related to the design of a fast interface, and addressed the performance measurement of a link level protocol. A forth study examined scheduling policies and their implementation in integrated services high speed local area networks. A fifth study addressed the analysis of a timer controlled token passing protocol, such as the one used in the IEEE 802.4 and the FDDI standards. In the following we provide a brief description of these studies and the main results obtained.

2.1.2 Topological Design of Fiber Optics Local Area Networks with Application to Expressnet

For networks which require a physical linear ordering among the stations, such as Expressnet, the *data transmission* and *linear-ordering* functions may be distinguished and provided by separate *data* and *control* subnetworks. While the data subnetwork may have various configurations, the control subnetwork must always have a linear unidirectional bus structure. Due to the reciprocity and excess loss of optical couplers, the number of stations N that can be accommodated on a linear fiber optic bus is severely limited; consequently, two techniques have been proposed to overcome this limitation; these are the *stretch* and the *bypass* techniques. The stretch technique reduces the number of transmit and receive couplers between the end stations from $2N$ to N. The bypass technique further reduces this number, for sufficiently large N, from N to $2\sqrt{2N}$. With regards to the data subnetwork, a number of configurations based on the linear, star, and tree topologies have been considered, (which can also be employed independently for access schemes which do not require any linear ordering among stations). For each of these data and control subnetwork configurations, the maximum number of stations as a function of the power margin have been computed for both reciprocal and non-reciprocal couplers. These results are important in that they suggest specific topologies which are good candidates for the implementation of Expressnet.

This work has been reported upon in three publications:

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*F. A. Tobagi, F. Borgonovo, and L. Fratta, "EXPRESS-NET: A High-Performance Integrated-Services Local Area Network," *IEEE Journal on Selected Areas in Communications, Special Issue on Local Area Networks, Vol. SAC-1, No. 5,* pp. 898–913, November 1983.

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1. M. Mehdi Nassehi, Fouad A. Tobagi and Michel E. Marhic, "Topological Design of Fiber Optics Local Area Networks with Application to Expressnet," Stanford Electronics Laboratories, *Technical Report No. 85–271*, March 1985; also CASIS *Technical Report No. 85–2*, March 1985.

2. F. A. Tobagi, M. M. Nassehi and M. E. Marhic, "Fiber Optic Configurations for Local Area Networks," International Seminar on Computer Networking and Performance Evaluation, Tokyo, Japan, September 18-20, 1985.

3. M. M. Nassehi, F. A. Tobagi and M. E. Marhic, "Fiber Optic Configurations for Local Area Networks," *IEEE Journal on Selected Areas in Communications, Special Issue on Fiber Optics Systems for Local Communications*, November 1985.

4. M. M. Nassehi, "Channel Access Schemes and Fiber Optic Configurations for Integrated Services Local Area Networks," Ph.D. Dissertation, Technical Report CSL-TR-87-322, Computer Systems Laboratory, March 87.

2.1.3 Selective Broadcast Interconnection (SBI) for Wideband Fiber-Optic Local Area Networks

The selective broadcast interconnection (SBI) is a scheme for directly interconnecting transmitting stations, each equipped with C_T transmitters, and receiving stations, each equipped with C_R receivers, such that each transmitting station is always connected to all receiving stations through passive communication channels with no intermediate switches. SBI consists of $C_T \cdot C_R$ separate broadcast subnetworks, each of which interconnects a subset of transmitting stations and a subset of receiving stations, such that each transmitting station and each receiving station are interconnected through a single subnetwork. Each subnetwork is shared by its transmitting members via some multiple-access scheme.

Comparing SBI with $C_T = C_R = C$ with the use of C broadcast buses, each connecting all transmitting stations to all receiving stations, one finds that in some cases, including that of equal single-destination traffic requirements for all source-destination pairs, the aggregate throughput with SBI can be higher by a factor of C, while the stations' hardware is the same. For nonuniform traffic requirements, however, the maximum aggregate throughput with SBI can be C times lower (in extreme situations). For fiber-optic implementations employing a central wiring closet, the two schemes require the same amount of fibers and, if the same elementary couplers are used to construct the required star coupler, SBI requires fewer couplers. Clearly, the same number of couplers and up to C times more fibers may be required for SBI in a linear-bus implementation. In all cases, transmitter power need only reach N/C receivers with SBI (instead of N with C parallel buses); this allows to accommodate a larger number of stations when implementing the interconnection with passive components.

This work has been reported upon in the following papers:

1. M. E. Marhic, Y. Birk and F. A. Tobagi, "Selective Broadcast Interconnection: a novel scheme for fiber-optic local area networks," *Optics Letters*, December 1985.

2. Y. Birk, M. E. Marhic and F. A. Tobagi, "Selective Broadcast Interconnection for Wideband Fiber Optic Local Area Networks," 2nd International Technical Symposium on Optical and Electro-Optical Applied Science and Engineering, Cannes, France, November 25-29, 1985.

3. Y. birk, F. A. Tobagi and M. E. Marhic, "Bus-Oriented Interconnection Topologies for Single-Hop Communication Among Multi-Transceiver Stations," *Proceedings of INFOCOM'88*, New Orleans, Louisiana, March 28-31, 1988.

4. Y. Birk, "Concurrent Communication Among Multi-Tansciever Stations over Shared Media," Ph.D. Dissertation, Technical Report CSL-TR-87-321, Computer Systems Laboratory, Stanford University, March 1987.

2.1.4 Performance Measurements of a Data Link Protocol

In an attempt to improve our understanding of packet processing requirement within a network interface, we measured the performance of a program implementing IEEE Std 802.2 Logical Link Control (LLC) protocol. Measurements were conducted in a controlled environment consisting of the LLC program running on a VAX under UNIX. The network is modeled as an infinite bandwidth channel; higher layers are modeled such that messages are always waiting to be transmitted, and receive buffers are always available. Thus, the LLC program is always either sending or receiving a message. The environment so chosen appropriately focuses the attention on the internal processing done within the LLC protocol. We measured the relative execution times of the various functions required in transferring data, over virtual circuits or as datagrams. The results show that most of the program execution time is spent in a few relatively low-level functions; most importantly, the block movement of data in memory, and packet queue management. The importance of these findings is paramount as they suggest the main problem areas to be addressed in the design of high speed network interfaces. We took advantage of these findings in the effort pertaining to the design of a high speed network interface.

This work has been reported upon in the following paper:

1. H. Kanakia and F. A. Tobagi, "Performance Measurements of a Data Link Protocol," *Proceedings of the International Conference on Communications, ICC' 86*, Toronto, June 22-25, 1986.

2.1.5 Transmission Sheduling Policies and Their Implementation In Integrated High-Speed Local Area Networks

The support of real-time applications on local area networks creates stringent requirements which must be satisfied by media access control protocols. Due to the distributed nature of local area networks, the design of such protocols involves considerable difficulties. The problem is further complicated by the desire to integrate multiple services on the same network, as different services have different throughput-delay requirements. We have designed a scheduling policy for meeting these requirements. We also provided a networking scheme for implementing the proposed or any other scheduling policy on a high-speed

unidirectional bus structure. The unidirectional medium provides a linear ordering among the stations which is used to achieve an efficient media access control protocol.

This work has been reported upon in the Ph.D. dissertation by M. M. Nassehi referenced above and in the following article:

1. M. M. Nassehi and F. A. Tobagi, "Transmission Scheduling Policies and Their Implementation in Integrated Services High-Speed Local Area Networks," *Proceedings of the Fifth European Fiber Optic Communication and Local Area Networks Exposition, EFOC/LAN 87,* Basel, Switzerland, June 3-5, 1987.

2.1.6 Throughput Analysis Of A Timer Controlled Token Passing Protocol

Some recently proposed token passing LAN standards, such as the IEEE 802.4 token bus standard and the FDDI token ring standard, employ a cycle-dependent timing mechanism to control station access to the channel. The major reason for incorporating the timing mechanism is to support synchronous and real-time application, and to provide priority among non-real-time traffic, by controlling the cycles in token passing. We have analyzed the throughput performance of such token passing protocols under a heavy load assumption. The analysis yields the amount of bandwidth allocated to each class as a function of the timing parameters, thus clearly revealing the priority features of the cycle-dependent timing mechanism. Such results also provide guidelines for selecting the system parameters to satisfy application requirements.

This work was reported upon in the following report and papers:

1. J. Pang and F. A. Tobagi, "Throughput Analysis of the IEEE 802.4 Token Passing Bus Standard Under Heavy Load," Stanford Computer Systems Laboratory Technical Report CSL-TR-87-331, March 1987.

2. J. Pang and F. A. Tobagi, "Throughput Analysis of a Timer-Controlled Token Passing Protocol Under Heavy Load," *Proceedings of INFOCOM'88,* New Orleans, Louisiana, March 28-31, 1988.

3. J. Pang and F. A. Tobagi, "Throughput Analysis of a Timer Controlled Token Passing Protocol Under Heavy Load," to appear in *IEEE Transactions on Communications.*

2.2 Experimental Studies

In addition to the theoretical studies reported upon above, we have, in the same period, undertaken the implementation of a 10 Mbps fiber optic Expressnet prototype. The main purpose of this task was two-fold: (i) to demonstrate the feasibility of the Expressnet concept which has never been implemented prior to this prototype, and (ii) to address issues that are specific to the fiber optics medium and to experiment with fiber optic components for broadcast *bus* networks in general, and Expressnet in particular. A two-station 10 Mbps fiber optics Expressnet prototypehas been completed and has been be successfully demonstrated in the laboratory. It is the result of an *iterative* process involving several subtasks outlined in the following.

2.2.1 Experimentation with Fiber Optic Media and Components

This subtask consisted of an evaluation of connectors, couplers, transmitters and receivers. Signal loss measurements have been conducted on connectors and couplers, particularly for their performance in the presence of concatenation. Many commercial transmitters and receivers have also been evaluated for operation in the prototype environment. The sample included: (a) API model TR1000C transmitter and receiver, (b) Codenoll model Codelink-50-T012 transmitter, (c) AFC model 2000D receiver, (d) modified AFC model 2000D receiver, (e) HP transmitters models HFBR-1402 and 1404, (f) HP receiver model HFBR-2404 with home-made amplifier and TTL conversion, (g) HP receiver board based on HFBR-2404 with HP-designed TTL compatible circuitry, and (h) Lytel Lytelink TR-050-101 receiver with TTL compatible circuitry. System studies, including bit-error rate measurements as a function of received pulse length have been performed with some of these components. The applicability of the various units for use in the *data subnetwork* or the *control subnetwork* has also been evaluated, thus identifying the most appropriate combination of topologies and components. Both performance and cost factors have been taken into account in determining the appropriateness of topologies/components combinations.

This work has been reported upon in the following internal note and article:

1. M. Marhic, "Optical Transmitters and Receivers and Ancillary Electronics," *Expressnet Technical Temporary Note*, Drafts 6/19/85 and 9/23/85.

2. M. E. Marhic and F. A. Tobagi, "Experimantation with a Fiber Optics Implementation of Expressnet," *Proceedings of the Fourth European Fiber Optic Communications and Local Area Networks Exposition, EFOC/LAN' 86*, Amsterdam, Holland, June 25-27, 1986.

2.2.2 TTL Implementation of Expressnet Media Access Control (MAC) Protocol, and Station Board Assembly

One of the primary reasons for selecting 10 Mbps for the *first* Expressnet prototype is to remain compatible with existing LAN interface microprocessor boards and LAN chips, and thus to simplify the overall task considerably. The station consists of a 68000 microprocessor board and a network board. The former represents in essence the host where packets originate or to which packets are destined, and thus drives the network board. The latter performs serial-parallel conversions, encoding-decoding, address generation and recognition, CRC generation and checking, and media access control. All but the last functions are performed by Advanced Micro Devices LANCE and SIA chips. Expressnet media access is implemented in TTL.

2.2.3 Station Software

The 68000 microprocessor has been programmed to generate and transmit packets for the purpose of demonstration and experimentation. Several modes of operation exist which

provide the necessary flexibility. The ability to transmit continually specially designed packets and to collect statistics of importance has allowed experimentation with fiber optics transmitters and receivers, and the assessment of their performance under specific signal waveforms.

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