

Gigabit Ethernet Technical Brief

Achieving End-to-End Performance



ALTEON
NETWORKS

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Contents

Gigabit Ethernet Technical Brief Achieving End-to-End Performance

| | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| Goals of Gigabit Ethernet | 1 |
| Uses of Gigabit Ethernet | 2 |
| Gigabit Ethernet History | 3 |
| Gigabit Ethernet Momentum | 4 |
| Workstation Speed | 4 |
| Desktop Multimedia | 5 |
| Multivendor Interoperability | 6 |
| Migrating to Gigabit Ethernet | 6 |
| Gigabit Ethernet Components | 6 |
| Upgrade Scenarios | 6 |
| Upgrading Connections to Centralized File and Compute Servers | 7 |
| Upgrading Connections between Switches | 8 |
| Upgrading a Switched Fast Ethernet Backbone | 8 |
| Upgrading a Shared FDDI Backbone | 9 |
| Protocol Architecture | 10 |
| Physical Interface Characteristics | 11 |
| Serializer/Deserializer | 11 |
| 8B/10B Encoding | 11 |
| MAC Layer | 11 |
| Upper Layers | 11 |
| Cabling types and distances | 12 |
| Flow Control | 12 |
| Full-Duplex Transmission | 12 |
| Half-duplex Transmission | 13 |
| Carrier Extension | 14 |
| Technology Advances | 15 |
| Ethernet Adapters | 15 |
| First Generation Ethernet Adapters | 16 |
| Second Generation Ethernet Adapters | 17 |
| Third Generation Ethernet Adapters—The Alteon Difference | 18 |
| Ethernet Switches | 20 |
| Specialized ASICs to meet the Performance Demands of Gigabit Ethernet | 21 |
| Seamless Integration with Ethernet and Fast Ethernet | 21 |
| Standard Ethernet Management | 21 |
| Conclusion | 22 |



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Intranet Web servers, centralized file and compute servers, data warehousing, groupware, medical imaging, CAD/CAM applications, 3-D modeling, animation, video, pre-press applications, server farms, seismic processing...

The list goes on and on. The demand for high-speed network connections is proliferating at a pace almost as rapid as the speed requirements of the applications themselves. Evidence is everywhere: the rapid acceptance of 10/100 Mbps connections on today's desktop computers, Ethernet switching at the department level, and the deployment of Fast Ethernet switches in corporate backbones are a few examples of the need for faster and faster networks.

And still, bottlenecks remain. Server network connections have been limited to 100 Mbps since FDDI was shipping in volume in the late 1980's. Fast Ethernet made it easier to build internetworking products, but did not provide a faster server interface. Today, centralized servers are often configured with multiple 100 Mbps network connections to meet bandwidth requirements.

Enter Gigabit Ethernet.

Gigabit Ethernet is a new technology that will provide seamless interoperability with Ethernet and Fast Ethernet. Gigabit Ethernet transfers data at a blazingly fast speed: one gigabit per second, or 100 times the rate of standard Ethernet. Gigabit Ethernet is designed to deliver the same benefits as Fast Ethernet: seamless integration with installed Ethernets, dramatically higher performance than the previous standard, and a familiar management environment.

It couldn't happen at a better time. Multimedia over IP is just starting to take off with the proposed IETF standards, real-time transfer protocol (RTP) and resource reservation protocol (RSVP). These protocols, combined with gigabit networks, high-performance desktops, and Internet technology, will quickly change the way corporations access information.

Ethernet. Fast Ethernet. Gigabit Ethernet. Networking made simple!

Goals of Gigabit Ethernet

Under development in the IEEE by the 802.3z Task Force, Gigabit Ethernet has the following primary goals:

- Complete interoperability with Ethernet and Fast Ethernet
 - Retain the installed base of NICs
 - Leverage the investment in hubs, switches, and routers
 - Leverage the network management environment



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